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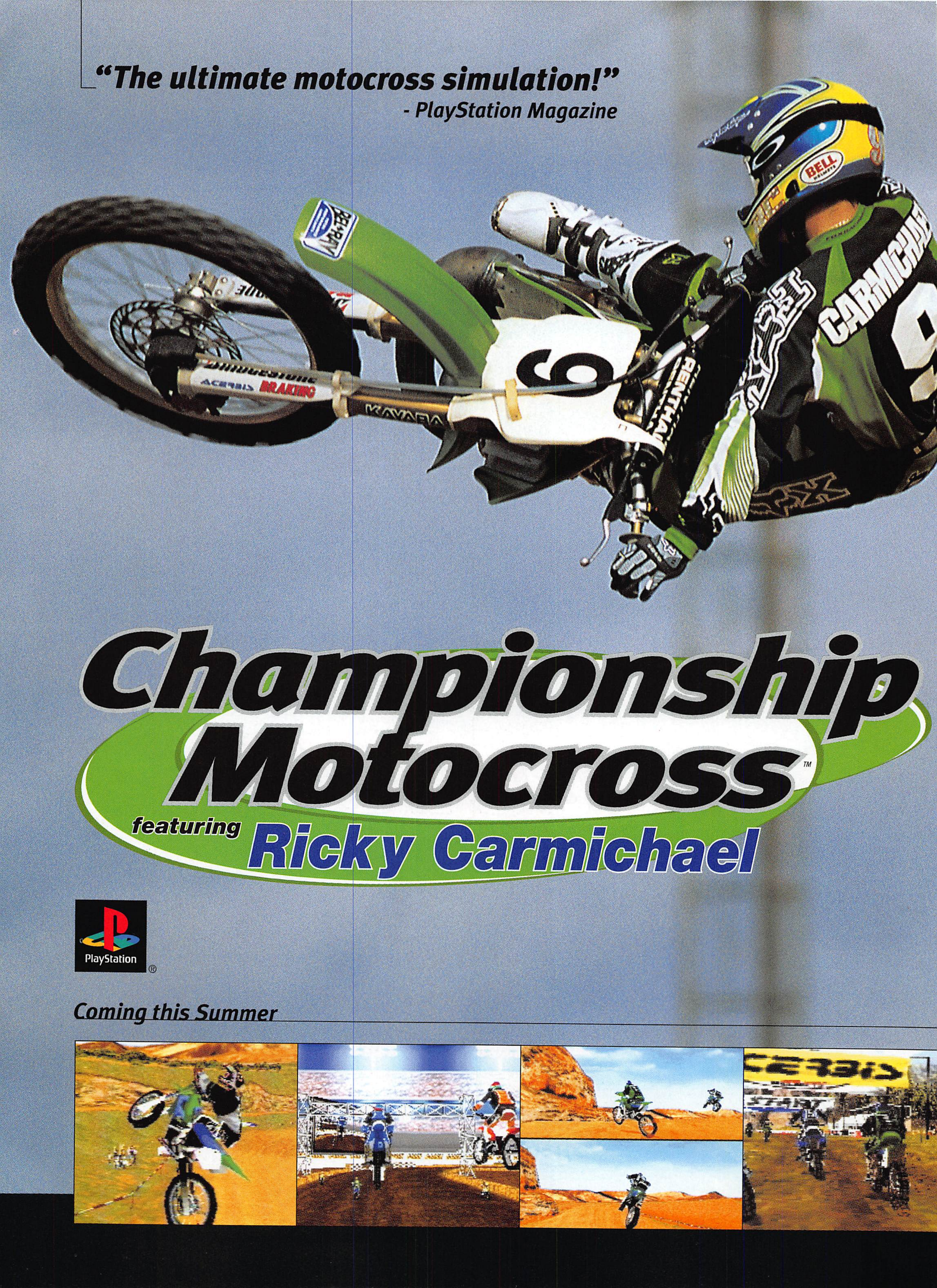
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**ISSN# 1092-7212**




Let's cut to the chase: if you haven't pre-purchased, pre-booked, or already made up your mind that you're going to plunk down the cash for a Dreamcast come September 9th, you're missing the boat. Those of you that are you using the "I'm gonna wait for PSY" or "Sega burned me with the 32X and/or SegaCD" argument as the basis for not getting a DC... well, your loss. Come September 9th, the rest of us will be reveling in the first batch of phenomenal Dreamcast software, while the aforementioned 'wait and see' guys twiddle their thumbs. Anyhow, that's all I'm gonna say about Dreamcast this month, after all, if we haven't got the point across by now — that DC is the real deal — some people are never gonna **get it** (ooh, the duality). Now, on to other matters...

For starters, I'd like to petition you, the reader (as mag editors tend to do from time to time) for your input on what would make *GameFan* a better magazine. While we've gotten plenty of positive feedback on our inclusion of Top Ten 'X', that was a shot in the dark — it makes our job that much easier if you guys out there in gameland let us know what you want to see. Unless of course we're doing such an incredible job that there's no room for improvement. And while I'd love to believe that, I'm gonna guess that it isn't the case (at least not all the time).

Next on the agenda: getting a job at *GF*. I want to take a sec and address this byzantine process by de-mystifying it and letting folks know exactly what it is we look for when bringing on new editors. Here's the three factors that I consider **most** important in determining whether you have 'what it takes' to get onboard at GF *when* we're hiring (let me make this clear — we're not hiring right now!). The three magical ingredients are: a sense of history; a passion for games, and a positive outlook on games and the industry in general (the last batch of applicants were among the most cynical people ever... putting even myself to shame). As a bonus, it doesn't hurt if you're a stellar writer (at the very least you need to be able to write your way out of a paper bag).

As far as a sense of history goes, that simply refers to the fact that you didn't just start playing games with PlayStation. Now I know most of you are thinking "Of course, is that really a problem?" The answer is a resounding 'YES!' Believe me, you'd be stunned at the number of writers in this biz that didn't pick up a control pad till the PS showed up. I know, I'm as incredulous as you are, but it's true. And for those that need to ask why a sense of history is important (at *GameFan*, at least) then the *other* guys might be a better fit for your 'skills.'

Passion. If there's a single most important factor when determining if a person will get a job at *GameFan*, it boils down to passion. For instance, if you sit down at that interview (and this goes for any job, BTW) and kinda just lay there and let the tide take you where it wants, then you're not going to make much of an impression. After all, you'd be correct in assuming that there are about a zillion people out there who would kill to be in that position — MAKE THE MOST OF IT (again, same goes for any job interview). Regale us with tales of how you beat *Metal Slug* on one credit or how you beat *Final Fantasy III* in less than 10 hours (Dango says it can be done... I'm not so sure) — show us that you're excited and that you want to convey that to the rest of the jaded world!

A positive outlook on the industry. It's simple really, and something that plays into being able to see the glass as half full, instead of half-empty. Instead of directing all of your considerable energies in typical Gen-X fashion towards finding every little nitpickable fault in a game, perhaps some time could be better spent looking for the redeeming qualities. Sure, there's going to be times when there isn't anything positive to be said (check this month's Viewpoints), but on the whole it'd be nice if everyone in gameland didn't have such a cynical outlook on games — reminds me of the movie industry these days (for those of you that hated *Phantom Menace*, SNAP OUT OF IT!!!).

All of this is, of course, moot since we're not actively hiring right now. But since we're always looking for ultra-talented people, you never know. And when and if you do get that magical interview... remember to wow us! Try to remember why it was that you got into video games in the first place. This isn't about which company has better hardware; the best marketing campaign; or the hippest commercials — this is about being a gamer in the purest sense of the word. Now that I've got that off my chest, enjoy the issue and I'll see you next month after I dig myself out of the flood of apps I'm going to get in response to this Ed Zone... <sigh>.

Later!

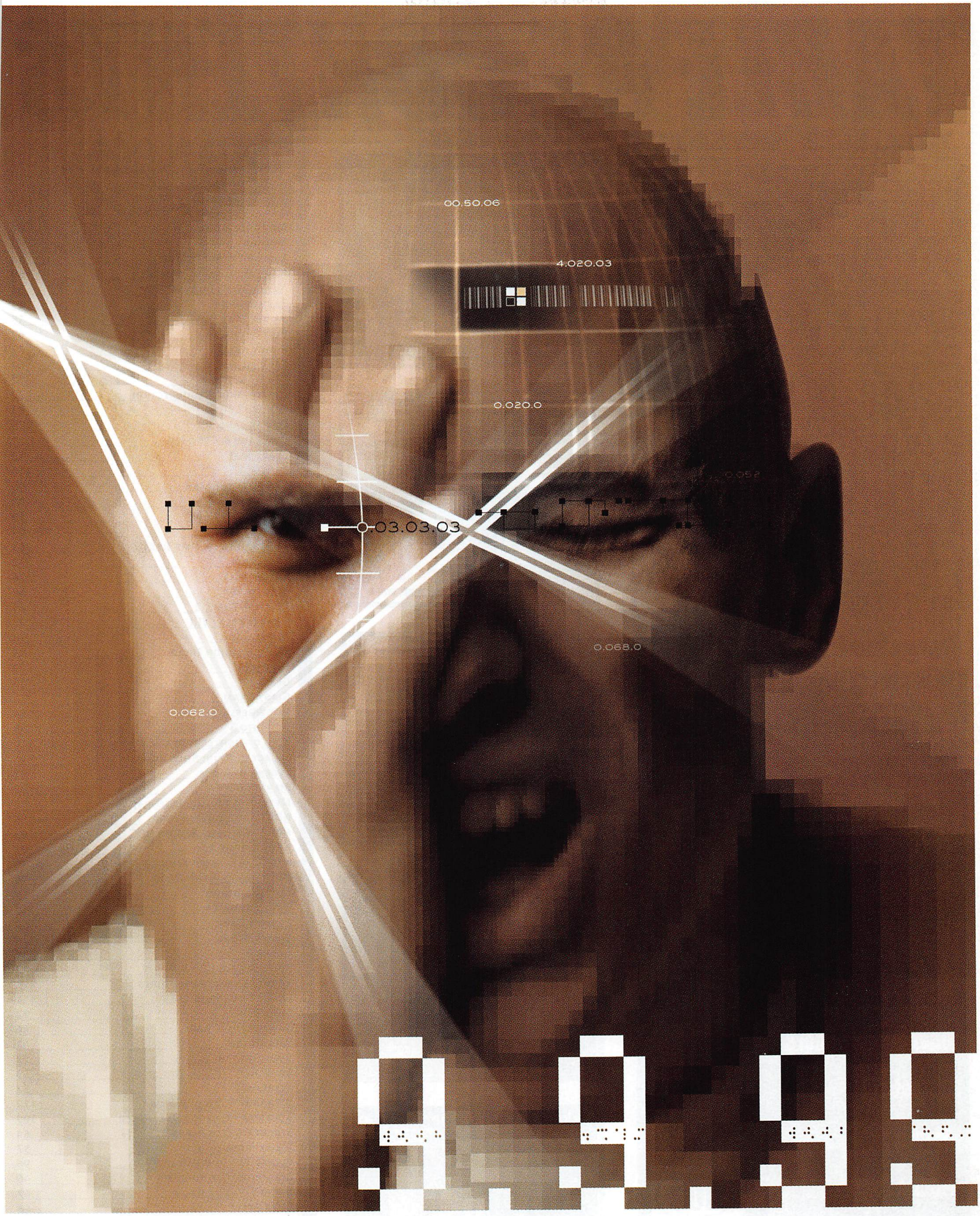
Editorial Director
**Eric Mylonas**


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ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE HINT

EVEN IF YOUR MEMORY DOESN'T FAIL YOU,
IT CAN'T HELP YOU.

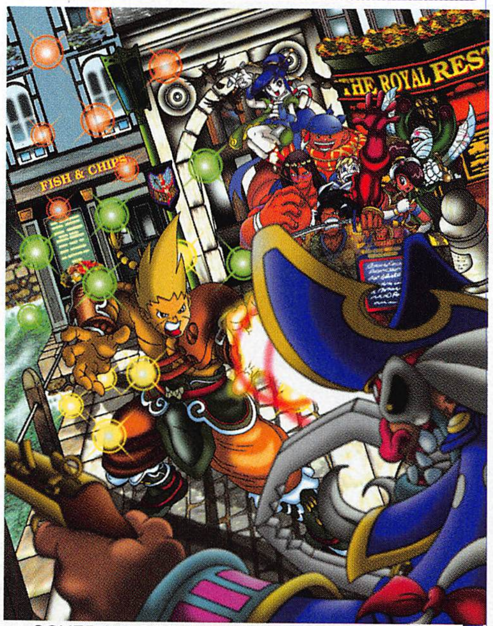
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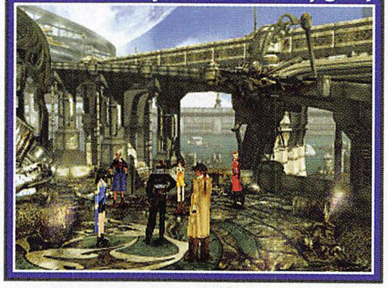
Volume 7, Issue 9    September 1999

COVER STORY




COVER IMAGE BY PATRICK "SPAZ!" SPAZIANTE





















## GAME INDEX


So many rats. So many ways to exterminate them.
So what are you waiting for?
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# TOP TEN MOST WANTED

**September 1999**

## Star Wars Episode 1: Racer

Publisher: Nintendo




## Reader's Top Ten

1) *SW Episode 1: Racer* - N64
2) *Super Smash Bros.* - N64
3) *Lunar: Silver Star Story* - PS
4) *Zelda: OOT* - N64
5) *South Park* - N64
6) *Syphon Filter* - PS
7) *Mario Party* - N64
8) *Bloody Roar 2* - PS
9) *Metal Gear Solid* - PS
10) *GoldenEye* - N64

## Reader's Most Wanted

1) *Soul Calibur* - DC
2) *Sonic Adventure* - DC
3) *Resident Evil 2* - N64
4) *Shen Mue* - DC
5) *Perfect Dark* - N64
6) *Final Fantasy VIII* - PS
7) *Ready 2 Rumble* - DC
8) *Donkey Kong 64* - N64
9) *House of the Dead 2* - DC
10) *Thousand Arms* - PS

Soul Calibur



## GameFan Editors' Top Ten

*Import title



MCE

1) *Tekken Tag Tourn.* - Arcade
2) *Final Fantasy VIII* - PS
3) *Tonic Trouble* - N64
4) *Ape Escape* - PS
5) *Soul Calibur* - DC
6) *Superman* - N64
7) *MGS: VR Missions* - PS
8) *Blasto* - PS
9) *Blast Corps* - N64
10) *R-Type Delta* - PS

*MCE (the Anti-ECM) in no way represents the opinions of "normal" ECM.*



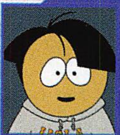
Dangohead

1) *Virtual On 2* - Arcade
2) *Bust-A-Move Pocket* - NGP
3) *SF3: 3rd Strike* - Arcade
4) *Frame Gride** - DC
5) *MGS Integral** - PS
6) *Star Ocean 2nd Story* - PS
7) *Sonic Adventure** - DC
8) *Powerstone* - Arcade
9) *KoF '99 Dream Match** - DC
10) *SamSho II* - NGP



Shidoshi

1) *Crazy Taxi* - Arcade
2) *KoF '99 Dream Match** - DC
3) *DeathTank* - SS
4) *Last Blade 2* - NG
5) *Soul Calibur* - DC
6) *Ape Escape* - PS
7) *Parasite Eve* - PS
8) *Puyo Puyon* - DC
9) *SF3: Third Strike* - Arcade
10) *Prop Cycle* - Arcade



Eggo

1) *Suikoden* - PS
2) *Final Fantasy Coll.** - PS
3) *Phantasy Star 2* - Genesis
4) *Quake II* - PC
5) *NBA Showtime* - Arcade
6) *MGS Integral** - PS
7) *SF3: 3rd Strike* - Arcade
8) *Star Ocean 2nd Story* - PS
9) *Lunar: SSS Complete* - PS
10) *Defender of the Crown* - C64

UNDER CONSTRUCTION

Fury

1) *Silent Scope* - Arcade
2) *SF EX2 Plus* - Arcade
3) *Wipeout 3* - PS
4) *Tekken Tag Tourn.* - Arcade
5) *Rush 2049* - Arcade
6) *Dance Dance Rev.* - Arcade
7) *Guitar Freaks* - Arcade
8) *SF3: Third Strike* - Arcade
9) *BeatMania II DX* - Arcade
10) *Omega Boost* - PS




El Nino

1) *EverQuest* - PC
2) *Civ: Test of Time* - PC
3) *NCAA Football 2000* - PS
4) *Quake II* - PC
5) *NBA Showtime* - Arcade
6) *Might & Magic VII* - PC
7) *Fox Champ. Hockey* - PS
8) *Sled Storm* - PS
9) *Mario Golf 64* - N64
10) *Marvel Vs. Capcom* - Arcade

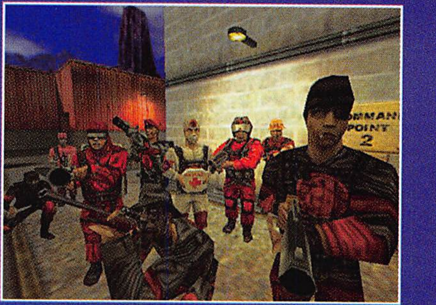


## Developer's Top Ten

This Month's Guest:
**Tristan Brett**
Lead Designer (*Sled Storm*), Electronic Arts

1. *Team Fortress Classic* - PC
2. *NHL 95/NHL 2000* - Gen/PS
3. *Diablo* - PC
4. *Half-Life* - PC
5. *Bomberman* - SNES
6. *MicroMachines* - PS
7. *Mario Kart* - N64
8. *Doom* - PC
9. *Age of Empires* - PC
10. *Command & Conquer* - PC

Team Fortress Classic



Publisher: Sierra

For me games have got to be visceral and action oriented. I like games with a bit more depth and thinking. Also, as I seem to have more friends than Jules, multiplayer games play a bigger part of my list — these games are great for having friends over(night!). Still, although I listed *Age of Empires* there still hasn't been a 'real' Star Wars game that has satisfied me.


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# EDITOR ROUNDUP

Nearly every day, GameFan's Editorial Director hears the question, "What exactly does ECM stand for?" Many guesses and theories have been put forth, but only he knows what it really stands for. The world may never know; but if you think about it, ECM could mean anything. In this month's roundup, we show how easy it is to describe people with the letters ECM.

## ecm@gamefan.com



### ECM

Extremely Cranky Midget—ECM's ill-tempered nature isn't helped any by the constant ribbing about his height, the death of all things he cherishs (2D games, shooters, and 2D shooters), and the mysterious disappearance of his prized action figures.

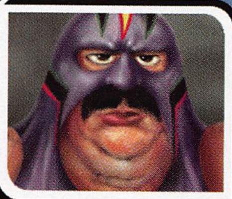
## cerberus@gamefan.com

Under Construction

### CERBERUS

Eluding CHP Megahorn—The life of a gaming editor isn't a fast paced one. Cerberus has made it his mission to change this. He's already been pulled over four times yet he's managed to avoid any moving violations. Even when he was clocked at 50 in a 5 zone.

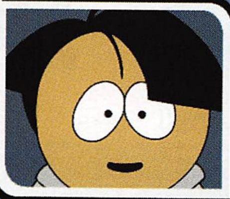
## elnino@gamefan.com



### EL NINO

Enchilada Chewin' Meathead—El Niño has evolved the ability to scarf down food as fast as humanly possible, allowing him to spend the remainder of his lunch hour with his "other" favorite pastime... *EverQuest*. Dark Elf needs food badly.

## eggo@gamefan.com



### EGGO

Engagement-Crushing Miscreant—Known for chasing married women, Eggo receives much flak for his "acquired taste" in lady friends, as well as his love for all things Square (*Soukaigi* or *Racing Lagoon*, anyone?) and his distaste for Asian food.

## dangohead@gamefan.com



### DANGOHEAD

Enormous Cranial Mass—Look at the size of that noggin'! It's HUUUGE!!! Considering paper clips, CDs, and small kittens regularly get sucked into the gravital orbit of his immense cranium, the Bonk jokes are well-deserved, don't you think?



### THE 6th MAN

Enigmatic, Clueless Mystery—WHO IS the 6th Man? Nobody knows yet, but we know he was spawned from the same vat of 'borrowed' ideas from which this roundup came. Someday, he will find his purpose in life, his reason for being... someday.



# THE ART DEPARTMENT

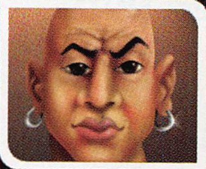
## reubus@gamefan.com



### REUBUS

Eerie, Carcinogen Man—Nobody can understand it, but Reubus is able to survive on a diet of Pepsi and cigarettes alone. Of course, he wasn't always that pale... and he didn't used to shake like that...

## waka@gamefan.com



### WAKA

*EverQuest* Crashes Marriage—Our Senior Art Director has forsaken his wife for the chance to be a half-elf druid in the world of *EverQuest*. He's currently lost in the "Ocean of Tears"... indeed.

## tao@gamefan.com

Under Construction

### TAO

Extraordinarily Creative Mind—This is how Tao likes to envision himself, but the truth of the matter is he's the creative force behind all those layouts which you can't read such as *MvC*.

# PRODUCTIVITY KILLER OF THE MONTH



## GF KONEKO™

Height: 3.25 in
Weight: 8.3 oz
Blood Type: AB+
Special Abilities: Caterwaul and Smoke Bomb Escape.

As the entire *GameFan* crew pulled a grueling all-nighter at the close of this issue, all work came to a screeching halt when someone said, "Waka, sounds like your car alarm is dying." Turns out, it wasn't a car alarm that was making that annoying sound. Rather, it was a nameless stray kitten who'd decided to shack up in the warm and cozy confines of Waka's car engine at 2AM, caterwauling like it just don't care.

With flashlight in hand, Reubus, Dangohead, Eggo, and Waka proceeded to chase this unwanted feline guest from car to car. Fearing for its safety and not wanting anyone to start their engine with a messy surprise, we tried to catch it, but the kitten continually eluded our grasp, moving at the speed of light, and fleeing from car engine to car engine, coming out only to eat some tuna we left it.

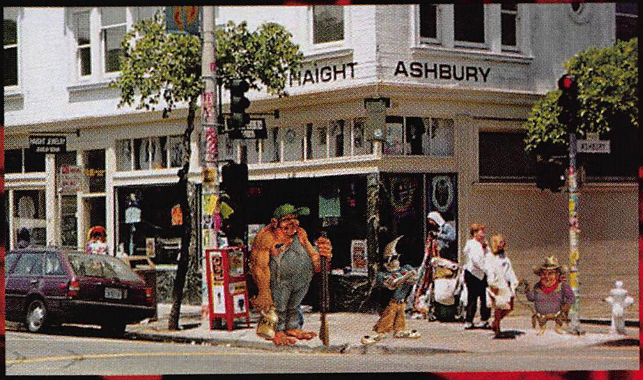
Imagine his surprise when we woke Cerberus saying, "Hey, we need your car keys... Why? Cuz there's a cat in your engine... No... a C-A-T... IN your car... I-N!"

Despite having a cave-full of ninja gamers armed with miniature *Ape Escape* nets, it appeared our combined powers were not enough to handle this mighty feline assassin. In the end, though, GameFan prevailed and 'saved' the cat... but it took 12 hours to apprehend.

# This month in GameFan's BOX-O-FUN!

## GF WORLD TOUR

This month, we caught up with Big Bubba, Super Teeter, and the Video Cowboy sending their regards from the "City by the Bay" — San Francisco, CA. The city's famous for hauling in an amazing two tons of seafood per day due to its many fishermen. They wish all their fans the best and wanted to let us know they're happily seeing the sights of the town: the Golden Gate Bridge, Fisherman's Wharf, Alcatraz, and... the B.O.B.!?! This, on the heels of Teeter racking up a $650 phone bill to a strange 900 number. Hmmm...

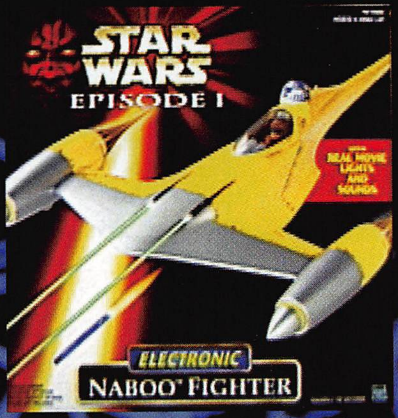



# CHICKEN OF THE MONTH

Although honorable mention goes to Cerberus' expense-paid trip to Japan, courtesy of Square (see Japan Now), this month's Super Chicken (a free goody, care of a game company) is the electronic Naboo Fighter toy from *Star Wars: Episode I.*

Sent with love from our friends at Nintendo, this little gem was discovered on our doorstep the same day in which the Naboo Fighter code for *Episode I: Racer* was released to the Internet (see this month's Hocus Pocus).

Days before the code was released, Nintendo made an announcement on their website that "The code was coming..." At first, we reacted with ambivalence, because who cares about a stinkin' code, right? But after receiving the Chicken of the Month... ECM underwent a miraculous change, becoming a carefree, happy, optimistic (but still short) little man. We shall call him MCE. When not playing with kids at the orphanage, MCE feeds the homeless, and houses stray animals.






# SAUSAGE OF THE MONTH



We couldn't resist sharing this little insight with our readers. Video game editor Blake Fischer, now working for a competitor who will Gen-erally remain nameless, is getting married in the near future. What's scary is Blake and his fiancée are also planning a virtual wedding in Norrath, the world of *EverQuest*. Not only that, there's talk of the programmers designing him a tuxedo 'skin' for his character. If that doesn't earn "Sausage of the Month" honors, I don't know what does.




Think you've got what it takes to be GF's "Sausage of the Month?" Send your picture and sob story care of the Postmeister, and you too can be laughed at — I mean looked up to — next month!

# The Battle Continues.



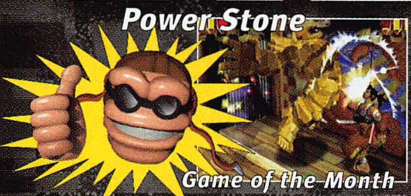
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*Mortal Kombat Gold. 20 of your favorite characters return in the greatest Mortal Kombat ever! Mortal Kombat has never been so deadly and it's* ***only available on the Sega Dreamcast system.***



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# VIEWPOINT







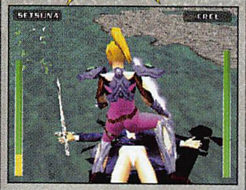






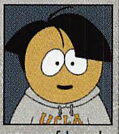
Cerberus — UNDER CONSTRUCTION

G — Graphics
C — Control
P — Play Mechanics
M — Music
O — Originality



## Evil Zone

PlayStation
Titus
Fighting



I couldn't come up with a more fitting name for this game. Just stay away from this monstrosity. The graphics are OK, but the gameplay is a fighting game for scrubs. Shades of Toshinden (ahh! Rungo flashbacks... noooo!!). The powering-up of levels is a good idea, and granted, there is a tiny amount of fun that can be derived from this game, but rent it only if you're extremely curious... and bored... and like schoolgirls with swords.

G 6 C 6 P 5 M 6 O 6 — **69**



Dude, this game rocks! The control is great, the gameplay is solid, and the... OW! <receiving a double slap from both the guys next to me>. What was I saying? Oh yes, awful control, gameplay that conjures old memories of *Toshinden* (gah!), and the voice acting talents of five dollar an hour, out-of-work, B-movie stars make this one helluva bad game. Unless you like gratuitous panty shots, avoid this like the plague.

G 7 C 5 P 3 M 5 O 3 — **56**

UNDER CONSTRUCTION

Fighting games are way too plentiful to warrant purchasing mediocre titles (read: *Evil Zone*). This game was created by Yukes, the same people who did *Soukaigi*, a game not worth bringing to the U.S. The worst part of *Evil Zone* isn't the bad audio-visual representation, but the two button control. Maybe when hanging out with friends in an inebriated state, this game might be fun, but under normal circumstances, no.

G 6 C 6 P 4 M 5 O 7 — **65**



## Final Fantasy VIII

PlayStation
Square EA
Role-Playing



So where do you think this Viewpoint is headed? I despised *FFVII* and I like *FFVIII* even less. Bland, pixelated battle sequences; drab, lifeless rendered locales (who needs hand-drawn backgrounds); and the best music MIDI could conjure up. Listen, this game is gonna sell in droves to a large group of people that never experienced a real Square RPG (*FF2&3*) — do us all a favor and buy *FF Anthology* and skip this "next gen power."

G 7 C 7 P 6 M 4 O 5 — **68**



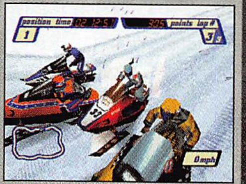
Utter the words *Final Fantasy* and I envision Square's glory days. *FFVII* is where they started slipping, and I believe *FFVIII* continues the disturbing trend for Square games to be more movie than game. The graphics are nice (though the summon spells are over the top), surpassing *FFVII*, but the story is confusing, the music is below average, and I found no enjoyment in playing this game. Squareheads will love it, but it's not for everybody.

G 8 C 8 P 7 M 4 O 7 — **78**

UNDER CONSTRUCTION

Playing *Final Fantasy* was once one of my greatest pleasures, next to beating El Niño senseless in fighting games. I played *FFVII* and it got stale for me near its midpoint. I wasn't very enthusiastic about trying *FFVIII*, but I'm glad I did. It's a departure from *VII*, reminding me a lot of the older *FFs* that I played on the NES and SNES. The Guardian Force concept is very cool, and I think the story was more believable than before. Get this one.

G 8 C 8 P 7 M 8 O 7 — **85**



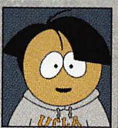
## Sled Storm

PlayStation
Electronic Arts
Racing



It's a well-documented fact that I don't much like racing games. It may have something to do with the fact that every third game on PS is a racer. However, this is a fun game! While I was incredulous with respect to El Niño's fascination with this title early on, I'm now completely sold. A very solid, super-fast engine combined with minimal draw-in coupled to a nice set of controls makes this a sleeper hit to look for (now how 'bout a DC port?).

G 8 C 8 P 8 M 6 O 9 — **87**



Well here's a sweet racing game. A nice frame-rate, realistic tricks (remember you are on a snowmobile here), cool course design, and a song by Rob Zombie (always a plus in my book). The only problem is the music is a little too quiet, even when cranked through the roof with the sounds turned down. Just make sure you disable the rubberband AI before you play. Highly recommended, and worth seeing but not a must-own game.

G 8 C 8 P 7 M 9 O 8 — **86**

UNDER CONSTRUCTION

Anyone out there ever play *Excite Bike?* For some reason *Sled Storm* reminds me of playing *Excite Bike*. I know they're two different sports, but I think it has to do with *Sled Storm's* lightning speed and awesome control. Sled crossing is fun, and it gets even better if you know how to pull off some of the tricks. Won't appeal to everyone, especially not racing fans, but I know Extreme Sports fanatics will be digging EA's latest.

G 8 C 9 P 8 M 5 O 7 — **81**



## Command & Conquer

Nintendo 64
Nintendo
Strategy



Ah yes, the reigning champ of RTS' has finally landed on N64 and it still doesn't hold a candle to the mighty *Herzog Zwei*. Barring that, however, it's a very solid port of the OLD PC game. While the sprites of old have given way to polys, the game actually plays better than the other two console ports from over two years ago (yes, it's been **that** long). Should you buy it? I suppose, if you've never played it before, otherwise... it's on to the next.

G 7 C 8 P 8 M 5 O 5 — **78**



I'm more of a *War/StarCraft* fan than a *C&C* guy. Even with that qualification, PC to console ports are usually not pretty, especially if it's an RTS. The control scheme is just unnatural without a mouse and keyboard (how many of you own a PS mouse? <Crickets chirping>). At least the game looks decent, has a nice frame-rate, and good sound. Console *C&C* fans should get a kick out of it, but otherwise it's strictly a rental... on a rainy day.

G 7 C 3 P 6 M 8 O 6 — **63**



I must admit, I laughed when I first heard that *C&C* was arriving on the N64. Then I played it at E3, then I played it when it came to the office, and despite the loss of some detail to the game, *C&C* on the N64 is pretty darned good. The only problem is the somewhat confusing controls with the N64 pad. But with a couple hours of practice, you'll be setting up barracks, sending out stealth ATC's, and getting your Ion Cannon ready... muwahahah!!

G 7 C 7 P 8 M 8 O 8 — **85**



## Duke Nukem: Zero Hour

Nintendo 64
GT Interactive
Adventure



A game that starts out kicking so much ass sadly falls flat by the third level. While the game is replete with trademark Duke humor (that's actually amusing, imagine that), the sluggish control pretty much destroys the game the more you play (you keep hoping that it'll get better... but it doesn't, <sniff>). The graphics are decent, but expect some ugly slowdown with the RAM Pak engaged. Better than *A Time to Kill*, but is that saying much?

G 8 C 5 P 6 M 5 O 7 — **70**



Switch-flipping and shooting action can happily co-exist. However, if the game you're playing is *Duke Nukem: Zero Hour*, you better have enough patience to handle the incredible amount of switch-finding and flipping found herein. Good control, nice graphics, and that *Duke*-style make it somewhat bearable, but without a map feature, you could end up looking for one switch for hours. If you can't handle that, don't get it.

G 8 C 8 P 6 M 7 O 7 — **81**

UNDER CONSTRUCTION

For me, Duke can do no wrong; I love all *Duke* games. Heck, I thought *Time to Kill* on PlayStation was a better game than *Tomb Raider*. *Zero Hour* is like *TTK* in a lot of ways, and like *Duke Nukem 3D* in others. I like that the control isn't ripped off from *Time to Kill*. But without an Expansion Pak, *Zero Hour* suffers from blur-vision™ so I suggest you invest in an Expansion Pak if you don't already have one. Now touch me again and I'll kill you!

G 8 C 8 P 8 M 7 O 6 — **85**

Gex 3 makes it to the N64 and I'm sure *Gex* fans all over the world are ecstatic with the news. What I don't understand... are there that many Gex fans out there to come out with a third *Gex*? I mean, the game itself is not bad at all, aside from some camera issues and tedious switch-flipping. But this game offers nothing new to the the *Gex* lineup. Graphics are average, gameplay is average... if you're into average games, this is for you.



G 7 C 7 P 6 M 6 O 5 **70**

When this came out on the PlayStation, I thought it was average at best. Now, the N64 port is here, and it's not as good. The frame-rate has died a horrible death in the land of conversions (lost somewhere out there along with a few of Gex's quips — another casualty of the cart wars). I hate to say it, but this franchise is definitely starting to show its age and become stale. Seriously, are you **that** excited about another *Gex*?

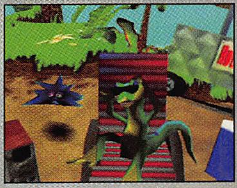


G 7 C 7 P 5 M 4 O 6 **68**

See Eggo's viewpoint if you want to know how I feel. The problem here is that Gex just isn't fun any more. Each subsequent chapter in the gecko's saga has seriously dampened any passion I once had for the character. As Eggo stated, how can anyone get worked up over another Gex with games like *Banjo*, *Mario*, and the upcoming *Rayman 2* on N64 to compete with? It's time to do something new, Crystal — no more *Gex* Mission Packs, Zzzzzz...



G 6 C 6 P 5 M 4 O 5 **60**



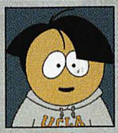
**Gex 3**
**Nintendo 64**
**Crave**
**Platformer**

While 3DO is milking the cow known as *Army Men* till the udders run dry, *Sarge's Heroes* is a pretty cool game. Nice graphics, good control, and an assortment of weapons will all keep gamers entertained. Sticking with the *Army Men* theme, you'll find humorous elements like bug zappers for walls, and melting enemies with the flamethrower. Definitely, one of the funnier games I've played on the Nintendo 64.



G 9 C 8 P 7 M 7 O 8 **88**

I had a bad experience with the PC version *Army Men* a long time back. Thus, I'm not crazy about seeing any more *Army Men* games. Even worse, *Sarge's Heroes* doesn't give me anything to get excited about, whereas *Air Attack* at least shows a little promise. This game gives me flashbacks of *Duke Nukem: Zero Hour* (another 3D action game which I didn't care for much). *Sarge's Heroes* is average at best.



G 5 C 6 P 6 M 7 O 8 **70**

Ready for another glass of strawberry milk? As 3DO continues to 'milk' the *Army Men* franchise to death (on some dubious success to start with), it's nice to see that, at the very least, *Sarge's Heroes* is strictly average (which is a huge improvement for this series). While the graphics are decent and the missions are nicely varied, the control hurts things a bit. Dango apparently thinks that funny games = good games, making *JJ & Jeff* the best game ever.



G 7 C 6 P 7 M 6 O 7 **75**



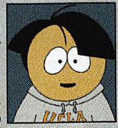
**Sarge's Heroes**
**Nintendo 64**
**3DO**
**Action**

What happened? The Dreamcast is capable of so much more than this. *Get Bass* in the arcade continues to be one of my favorite quarter munchers. Sega went to the trouble of having a fishing reel done up but there's no tension in the console controller (it doesn't pull back). Plus the graphics are not arcade perfect. The game is the same, but not visually. I don't know, maybe this is one game that should have stayed in arcades...

UNDER CONSTRUCTION

G 7 C 9 P 7 M 4 O 8 **80**

Ahh, fishing... one of those niche games which either you love, never gave a chance, or hate. I happen to like fishing games, and thus, when a good one like *Get Bass* comes by, fishing fans should stand up and take notice. Unfortunately, it's not arcade perfect, whereas almost every other DC game is. It's too bad that there's slowdown and loading here, but that shouldn't stop gamers from nibbling. The reel is a must-have though.

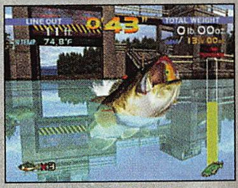


G 8 C 8 P 9 M 5 O 8 **87**

Well, since I reviewed this game a few issues back I don't have much more to say about it other than if you purchase the rod controller, you'll have a good time. Sadly, they didn't address the slowdown issue in the U.S. port, but it's still a great game to while away a quiet Sunday afternoon with a couple of friends. You should probably buy this just to prove to yourself once and for all that fishing games are fun and that we'll pay to play niche games.



G 8 C 8 P 8 M 8 O 9 **83**



**Bass Fishing**
**Dreamcast**
**Sega**
**Fishing**

*Power Stone* isn't your standard Capcom fighter — there are no sprites. *Power Stone* has a jump button and only two attack buttons. I'd say that's quite different than most anything Capcom has done to date. The cast of *Power Stone* may not be the most original, but the gameplay is. It's more fun than should be allowed while playing a Dreamcast. If every genre can get a game as good as this then the Dreamcast has a chance.

UNDER CONSTRUCTION

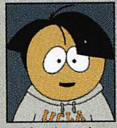
G 8 C 9 P 9 M 7 O 7 **90**

Whoa, a new fighting game from Capcom? And what's this... no blocking, no sprites, and NO *Street Fighter* label? Capcom should be lauded for their efforts with *Power Stone*, one of the best games on the Dreamcast. Stunning graphics and excellent control... don't let the simple controls make you think this is a simple game. And with bonus items and extra modes exclusive to the DC version, all DC owners have to own *Power Stone*.



G 10 C 9 P 8 M 9 O 7 **95**

I'm a fan of Capcom fighters, growing up on the originator of it all (*SFII*), and I like the 3D *Rival Schools*. *Power Stone*, too, I like, especially since it's arguably the best-looking game on the Dreamcast so far. The only point which bothers me is the simplicity of the gameplay. It'll be loved by casual gamers (aka button-mashers). But hard-core fighting fans will pick up *PS*, say, "That's cool," then go back to *Street Fighter*. Still, a must-see title.



G 9 C 8 P 7 M 8 O 9 **87**



**Power Stone**
**Dreamcast**
**Capcom**
**Fighting**

Japan has an odd attraction with fighting games that have rosters composed entirely of bodacious women. The few games I've seen have been real poop up until this point. *Asuka 120%* isn't *SFA3*, but it can be fun. The control is good and all the attacks are very easy to execute. I know Eggo has his panties in a bunch about *Asuka's* "Thug Tactics." Not all fighting games are meant to be taken seriously, just look at *MK*...

UNDER CONSTRUCTION

G 7 C 8 P 8 M 5 O 5 **70**

Well-endowed girls, most of them scantily clad, in a fighting game... I wonder what target audience this game is aiming for. *Asuka* is done in the same vein as *Anarchy in Nippon* and *Groove On Fight* — a totally non-serious fighting game with insane combos and a tendency for having unbalanced fighters. But it's fast, controls well, and has above-average 2D graphics. But I'll still take *Hyper Fighting* over it any day.



G 8 C 8 P 6 M 6 O 5 **73**

Umm, no. While I won't profess to being a hard-core fighting game fan, I do have a fairly well-developed drivel-meter. The oddly named Family Soft (yeah, for whose family?) gives us yet another chapter in the wacky world of chick fighting games. While this game probably appeals heavily to the dating sim market, I'm afraid that unless you're heavily into this nonsense you'd best look elsewhere. Still, it's better than *Tekken Tag*.



G 7 C 5 P 5 M 5 O 5 **51**



**Asuka 120%**
**PlayStation (Import)**
**Family Soft**
**Fighting**

It's an ailment that I can't stop, I love *Metal Gear*. I know this is technically just an upgrade with a ton of VR missions, but I don't care. All I want to play is the actual game. If you missed out on the *Metal Gear* craze last year you get another chance; otherwise you can go wild with 300 VR missions. These missions get insanely difficult, so be prepared to meet your limits. Unless you're a *MGS* freak you might want to pass here and wait for a sequel.

UNDER CONSTRUCTION

G 9 C 7 P 8 M 9 O 4 **90**

Don't listen to the barbarian to the right. He's the type who takes on an army of cyborgs with a *Swiss Army knife*. *MGS Integral* may only be an upgrade, but I enjoyed the extra 300 VR missions as well as playing *MGS* all over again. To be honest, I can't recommend this game to people who don't love *MGS*. But if you never played *MGS* or know what *Big Boss* ranking is, then you'll feel at home with *MGS Integral*.

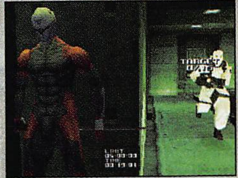


G 9 C 8 P 9 M 9 O 6 **92**

Well here's a shocker! A Japanese game with a minor (and I do mean minor) upgrade, tagged as new to sell a few thousand more copies to gamers expecting something more than just 300 (?!) monotonous, brain-dead, 'VR Missions.' Give me a break, Konami. Even the 'extra special' Ninja-play flat-out **sucks** (thanks... for all three levels). Can you say cash run? As for Dango, at least I'm not poking my uncle with a pointy stick.



G 7 C 7 P 7 M 7 O 0 **50**



**MGS Integral**
**PlayStation (Import)**
**Konami**
**Adventure**



## Rival Schools 2
PlayStation (Import)
Capcom
Fighting



The first *Rival Schools* was a nice diversion as far as 3D fighters go. However, as with *MGSI* this simply strikes me more as a cash-run for Capcom. Sure, there are two new characters and some added modes, but this is simply a lot more of the same (and as I recall, thinking like this landed them in trouble with *SSF2*). This game does nothing to advance the series — nothing new for a sequel — and is best left on the shelf with *MGSI*..

G 6 C 7 P 7 M 5 O 5 **60**



They should've called it *Rival Schools Plus*... the graphics and gameplay are nearly identical except for some tweaks in the name of character balance. While *Rival Schools* has a ton of extra modes and the always cool simulation mode, the meat of this game remains the same. I loved the first *Rival Schools*, but a sequel should mean improvements in gameplay and visuals. *Rival Schools 2* does neither to any degree to warrant it a sequel.

G 7 C 8 P 7 M 7 O 2 **72**

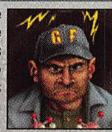
UNDER CONSTRUCTION

I can't see a sequel to the school simulation portion of *Justice Schools* doing too well. Gameplay is a carbon copy except for a couple of balance issues. There's too much going on as far as slow-paced, soap opera story to get into. The new characters are really odd and no fun to play — well maybe a little. Let me get to the point, if the fighting is what you're interest ed in, then get the first game in English.

G 7 C 8 P 8 M 8 O 6 **70**

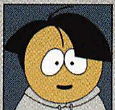


## Evangelion
Nintendo 64 (Import)
Bandai
Digital Comic



Wow, this is bad. I know some of you out there actually care about digital comics (*Snatcher*, etc.) but not me; no sir. Some blazing visuals (really stunning for N64) and a story line that apes the anime, this game *might* appeal to hard-core to-the-death fans of the show and/or fans of the prior Saturn editions. It's really too bad, seeing as how it probably would have made for a decent fighting game on a console in acute need of such.

G 9 C 2 P 2 M 7 O 8 **53**



I was into anime back in the late '80s, but not in the '90s, so I missed out on *Evangelion*... and all that history which this game plays to. If you're like me (having not seen the anime), then this game is definitely not for you. It's a total niche game, and a digital comic to boot. Fans of the series should like it. At least the graphics are all nice and shiny. Other than that, there's really not much to see here. Move along... move along...

G 8 C 5 P 4 M 7 O 7 **48**



Digital comics... you know what they are... get to this point, perform a certain action, continue on to the next point. Japan has a ton of these games, and here comes *Evangelion 64*. I HATE THESE GAMES. Reason? You never have any rea control of your character, and you never ge to make any real decisions. Looks great that's for sure. And if you're a big fan o *Evangelion*, you'll like this game. Otherwise, stay away.

G 8 C 3 P 3 M 6 O 2 **50**

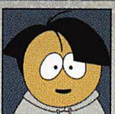


## Frame Gride
Dreamcast (Import)
From Software
Fighting



YES! This is DC AAA title number three (*Sonic Adventure* and *Power Stone* being the other two), and from From Software of all places — good things do come in smaller packages. While the actual in-game combat can't hang with *VOOT*, the simple fact is that when you get into the actual mech-building/mech-rancher aspect, the game takes on a life of its own. Blazing visuals, solid music, and remarkable replayability, I await the U.S. release with bated breath.

G 9 C 8 P 10 M 8 O 10 **98**



Hey *Armored Core* fans, light me up. "Flame On!" Because I don't like your game, no matter what you call it. *AC* or *Frame Gride*, it's all the same to me. Dress it up with awesome mech design, a medieval setting, and 'ranching' elements, but I still don't like the 'combat' found herein. If I want to ranch monsters, I'll do it in a Tecmo game. If I want mech combat, I'll play *Virtual On* (fear my Bal Bas Bow!!!). Now Sega, where is *VOOT*?!?!

G 8 C 5 P 4 M 6 O 7 **76**

UNDER CONSTRUCTION

Yeah! *Armored Core* meets *Virtual On*. Nothing beats that combination, well maybe *Robotech* meets *Virtual On*, but that's beside the point. *Frame Gride* compels you to keep playing so you can see more mechs and gorgeous backgrounds Like an *Armored Core* on serious drugs *Frame Gride* doesn't mess around. Do I hear Internet play? The only thing that could make this bad boy better would be a dual *Virtual On* arcade stick.

G 9 C 8 P 8 M 8 O 7 **89**



## Giant Gram
Dreamcast (Import)
Sega
Wrestling



There's only one wrestling game I'll even care to admit to liking: *Fire Pro 6 Man Scramble*. *Giant Gram* is decent, but I wasn't much for *All Japan Pro Featuring Virtua*. However, any game with four-players automatically gains at least a shred of credibility as a party game. Sadly, that's as far as I'll go with this one. Good graphics (yeah, only good) and some OK gameplay make for a fun party game, but not much else.

G 7 C 7 P 9 M 6 O 6 **78**



Wrestling games are a bit different then most. Either you're totally into them, or totally not. I was into them back in the day (when *WWF Superstars* and *Mat Mania* were in arcades), but since then I haven't liked 'rasslin games. *Giant Gram's* graphics are decent, the control is OK, but it's just not as fun as older wrestling games. Maybe it's because I don't recognize any of the wrestlers. Still, four players is always fun.

G 8 C 7 P 6 M 8 O 7 **72**



Rasslin' games aren't my style, mainly cuz the controls and pace are way to slow for my taste. *Giant Gram* is one of the few (next to the *Fire Pro* series) rasslin' games that I can recommend. Great visuals, excellent control, and solid gameplay elements are the missing ingredients in most rasslin' games and *GG* has them all. Sure, it could have more special moves, but still, *GG* slams the competition out of the ring.

G 9 C 9 P 8 M 7 O 7 **88**



## King of Fighters 99
Dreamcast (Import)
SNK
Fighting



I loved *King of Fighters R2*. Now would someone please tell me how it has better character animation than a Dreamcast game?! Better mix up a glass of the ol' strawberry milk cause this is one cow that's been milked to death. It's time for SNK to either a. stop re-using the same tired frames over, or b. upgrade the animation and/or move it over to Naomi hardware. Sure it still plays like *KoF*, but it's time to move on... please join me.

G 7 C 8 P 8 M 6 O 4 **73**



What is this, Eggo's month of hating games? Everywhere I look there's a game I'm not excited about. Now here's another SNK fighting game (remember, I pitch my tent in Capcom's campgrounds) I don't care for. It doesn't look pretty or play that well. 60 FPS and Mai won't make up for the fact that this is still *King of Fighters*. Fans of the series won't mind a bit. Their minds are already made up, as is mine. *Hyperfighting*, anyone?

G 6 C 7 P 5 M 7 O 5 **66**



*King of Fighters '99 Dream Match* is an old game. While it has all the newest features and a lineup with a plethora of fighters, the animation and fighting remains old. Sure, it blazes at 60 fps and it has new 3D backgrounds. Right, it has the new Neo Geo Pocket hook up that adds more interactivity for both systems, but for a next generation system, I expect a lot more. By no means is *KoF '99 Dream Match* a bad fighting game... just old.

G 7 C 9 P 9 M 7 O 7 **83**



## Tekken Tag Tournament
Arcade
Namco
Fighting



Another chapter in the game-play-deprived *Tekken* Saga, *Tekken Tag* brings in the ability to (hold your breath) tag in another character. Talk about revolutionary! The best part is, the graphics are worse; there's now some nice slowdown and the backgrounds are devoid of detail — all that and you can then keep telling yourself that pre-set 10-hit combos and button-mashing gameplay are much better than the *VF* series. I'd rather play *Time Killers*.

G 5 C 5 P 5 M 9 O 3 **50**



Oh look, now I can tag in another character which I don't care about. I prefer fighting games to be toned down in the juggle department, which explains why I hate *Tekken Tag Tournament* (those 10-hits might also have something to do with it). Namco should time-release some gameplay. Lastly, it's hard to look at this game in an unbiased light when the Dreamcast *Soul Calibur* abuses it graphically like a red-headed stepchild.

G 6 C 6 P 5 M 6 O 4 **52**



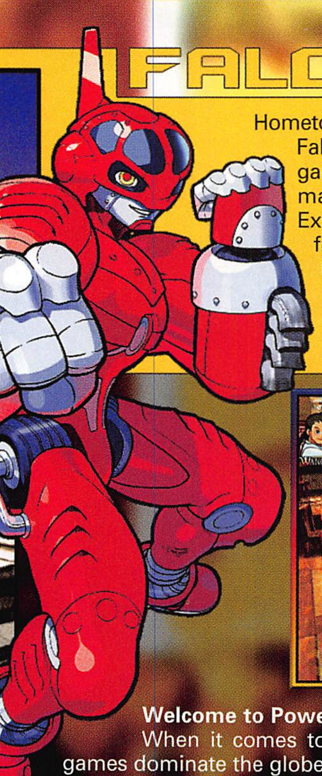
I am a *Virtua Fighter* fan. So for me to admit to liking any *Tekken* game, I'd be asking to be struck by lightning. Here's the formula Namco used for making the game: *Tekken 1, 2, 3* + extra button = *Tekken Tag Tournament*. I will admit that the novelty of tagging your partner in is pretty cool, and the special tag team attacks are fun to watch. But nothing in *TTT* has been upgraded. Still a scrub game compared to the likes of *VF* series.

G 7 C 8 P 7 M 7 O 6 **75**



Capcom — a name that is revered, cherished, and loved by gamers, from the lowliest of scrubs to the highest of ninja-gamers. While Capcom's titles encompass everything from action (Megaman) to adventure (Resident Evil) to role-playing (Breath of Fire), it was the advent of Street Fighter II that elevated Capcom to god-like status. This single fighting game began Capcom's reign as the undisputed king of 2D fighting games (oh boy, I can already see the flaming e-mails to come from SNK faithfuls). 3D is a realm that Capcom has explored with minimal success because: (1) 3D fighting masters Sega and Namco are firmly entrenched in their VF and Tekken bunkers and (2) none of Capcom's 3D fighting games have the same innovation or impact as Street Fighter II did. No 3D Capcom game can compete in terms of gameplay, graphics, and innovation, compared to the likes of the Virtua Fighter 3tb or Tekken 3. That is, until now...

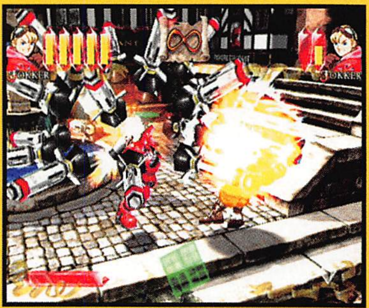
# FALCON



Hometown: Londo

Falcon is definitely the "Ryu" of the game , since he doesn't have any major weaknesses. His Power Explosion (right) looks like a scene from a *Robotech* episode, while his Power Rocket attack (left) resembles a certain J.Talbain attack.

Inspired by: *The Rocketeer*













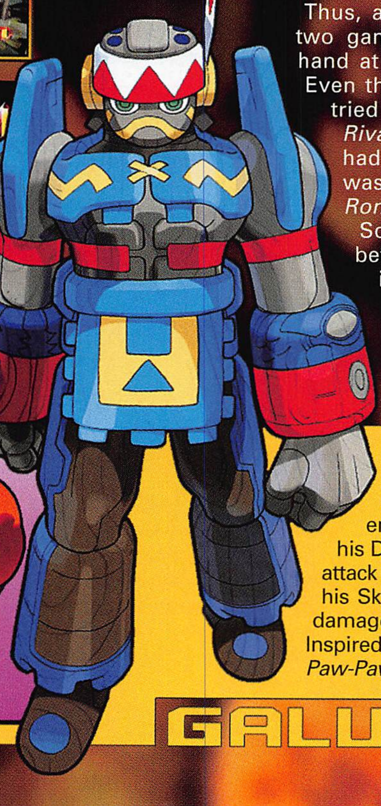
**Welcome to Power Stone World**

When it comes to 3D fighters, two games dominate the globe: *Virtua Fighter* and *Tekken*. As everybody knows, the *Virtua Fighter* series is known for its character detail and insane learning curve. On the other end of the spectrum, you have the *Tekken* series — known for flashy super moves, awesome combos, and a generous learning curve. So if you're into 3D fighters, it's a choice between *Virtua Fighter* or *Tekken*; it's like asking whether you're a Beatles or a Stones fan. You can like both, but when it comes down to it, you have to lean one way or the other. The *VF* dynasty has been tailored to hard-core gamers, who dedicate hours of practice to complicated techniques like the extremely-frustrating Akira-knee. The *Tekken* line is custom-suited for the casual gamer who has no time to waste on such frivolous techniques, and would rather pound out a sequence of button commands, resulting in a fancy combo.

Thus, a "gray area" has developed between these two games, and many companies have tried their hand at filling this void... yet nearly all have failed. Even the mighty Capcom, god of the 2D fighter, has tried with 3D fighting games like: *Star Gladiator*, *Rival Schools*, and *Tech Romancer*. *Star Gladiator* had clunky control and simple gameplay, *Rival Schools* was a novel game with flashy supers and panty shots, and *Tech Romancer* was too slow with only average graphics.

So will this rift always exist? Will there ever be an end to this feud between friends who don't get along because one prefers a button instead of pulling back to block? Will this civil war ever end in which brothers fight because one prefers an evade button to double tapping up or down? Fear not, loyal readers! Borrowing a line from the sagely Postmeister, "prostrate yourselves before me and prepare to receive a morsel of my vast knowledge..." as *GameFan* welcomes you to *Power Stone*.





Hometown: Dullstown

The champion of his tribe, Galuda is the second-most powerful fighter in the game. However, his Divine Punishment of Light Fusion attack (right) is pretty easy to avoid and his Sky War Cry (above, left) deals big damage but is hard to connect.

Inspired By: Billy from *Predator* and the *Paw-Paw Bears*



# GALUDA

# AYAME



Hometown: Oeda
Ayame is a very fast but weak fighter. Her 100 Flower Fusion attack (left) is very easy to dodge and her Cherry Blossom Dance (below, right) won't hit if you're too far away.
Inspired By: Ryo-Ohki from *Tenchi* and any annoyingly cute anime girl (i.e. Shampoo)

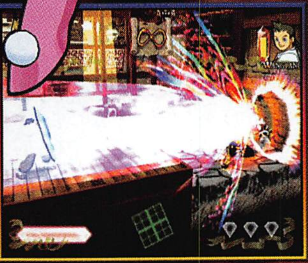


**Something Different For A Change**

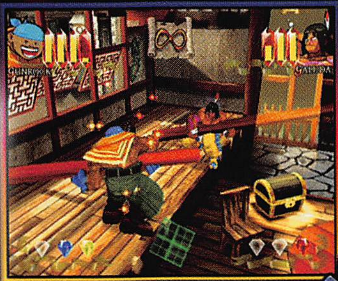
For those who've lost contact with the video game world, be it because you've been living in a cold, dark cave or just playing *EverQuest*, *Power Stone* is Capcom's latest foray into the fighting realm, and with it comes change... significant change. 2D sprites give way to 3D polygonal power. Two-dimensional planes have grown to become three-dimensional, free-roaming environments. And the most drastic stray from the norm is the lack of blocking. Scary isn't it, Capcom fans?

The premise of *Power Stone* is the same as all other fighting games: Beat the snot out of your opponent, using any means necessary. In *Power Stone*, you're not limited to killer kicks, thunderous throws, or fists o' fury. Various objects also populate the 3D arena, and it's your job to abuse them by shoving, lifting, or hurling them at your opponent. Chests contain other utensils of pain, ranging from bruising iron pipes to explosive rocket launchers. And most levels have some dangerous elements thrown in as well — whether it's lamps that can be dislodged, or a conveyer belt leading to a meat-grinder.

But the greatest weapons at your disposal are power stones. Every fighter seeks the legendary power stones, which have the ability to make anyone's dream come true. And on the battlefield, once a fighter gets the red, yellow, and blue power stones, a shining transformation takes place, as that fighter assumes his/her Power Drive form. In this form, a Power Drive meter appears at the bottom of the screen which slowly drains as time goes by. Once in Power Drive form, the fighter acquires incredible powers: resistance to almost any kind of attack and the ability to release their Power Fusion attack. The















Hometown: Mutsu
Ryoma's main strength lies in his range, which is extended by the katana he wields. His Midare Zantou (left) doesn't do a lot of damage, but it's hard to avoid while his Tenchi Ryoudan (up, right) does good damage, though only at close range.
Inspired by: *Yojimbo* and *The Silver Samurai from Marvel Comics™.*

# RYOMA

## GUNROCK





Hometown: Dawnvolta
Gunrock is the most powerful character in the game and my choice in *PS*. His Rock N' Roll Fusion attack (right) does incredible damage, and his Earthquake (below, left) can surprise aerial enemies.
Inspired by:
*The Thing* (Ben Grimm)









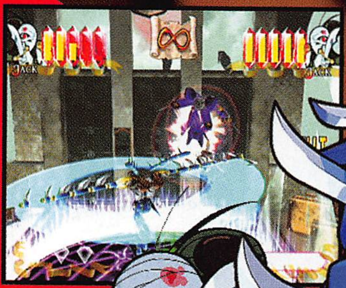
Power Fusion attack is an extremely powerful assault, capable of taking out the opposition for good. However, every time you use your powers in Power Drive mode, it drains more of your Power Drive meter. Once depleted, the power stones are released back into the arena, and the mad scramble begins again. He who controls the power stones controls the match. All of this is a departure from what you'd expect from Capcom. But if there's one thing Capcom knows, it's how to make their games look good. And if you haven't seen the game yet, nothing can prepare you for the visual splendor of *Power Stone*.

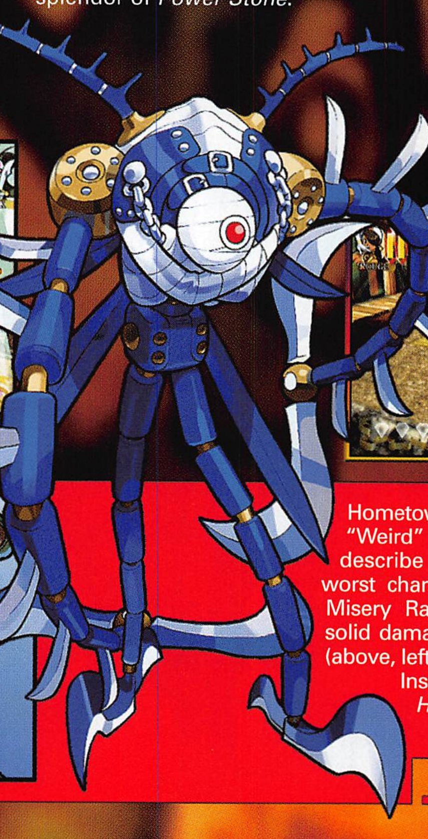
**New Look, Same Quality**

*Sonic Adventure* was our first taste of what the Dreamcast is capable of. Sure, it had pop-up, collision problems, and other graphical grievances, but *SA* paved the road for the next-generation of graphical eye-pleasers. *Power Stone* takes it to the next level. It's not enough that Capcom made *Power Stone* free of graphical glitches, but the level of detail for characters, weapons, and backgrounds is simply amazing. The 3D visuals are dead solid, and you'll be hard-pressed to find anything wrong with the graphics. The game cruises at a magical 60 frames per second, and each background, albeit small, features an endless amount of detail — from the water effects of Ryoma's stage, to the rough stone-road of Falcon's lair. Each level has an authentic feel that has to be seen to be believed.

You want special effects? This is what I'm talkin' about! In the extremely fast-paced, kinetic world of *Power Stone*, the special effects are nothing short of breathtaking. Special attacks in Power Drive mode flood your living room with graphical bliss such as Rouge's fiery assaults, the lightspeed glow of Wang Tang's energy bolts, or the electrical sparks of Ryoma's blade. And the fusion attacks? The words "OH MY GOD!" will be uttered frequently by you and your friends every time a Power Fusion attack is executed.

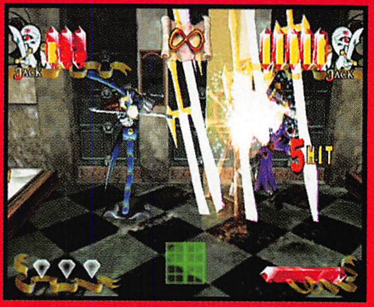
While the game's look is polygonal, the style of the characters is 2D and cartoony. Without getting too much into the role of an art critic, the transition from character sketches on an artist's pad to in-game graphics has been made flawlessly. Character faces have cool, 2D, cartoon-like expressions, and sometimes I can't stop myself from











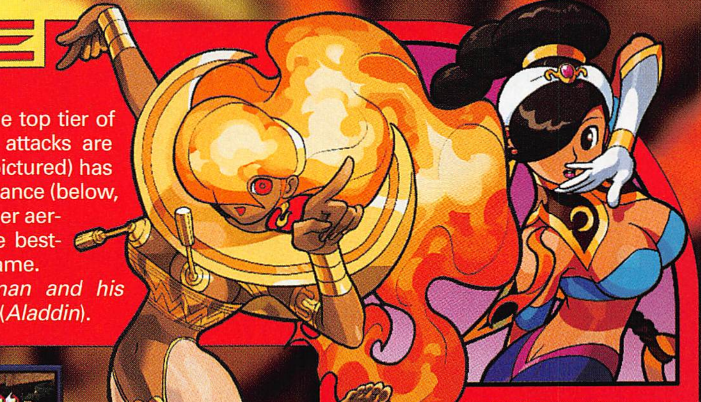
Hometown: Manches
"Weird" does not even begin to describe Jack. Probably the worst character in the game, his Misery Rain Fusion (right) does solid damage but his Killer Dance (above, left) has limited range.
Inspired by: *Darkman* and *Hopper* from *A Bug's Life*.

## JACK

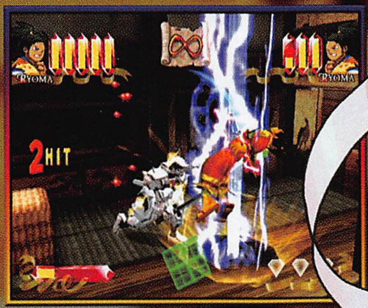
# ROUGE

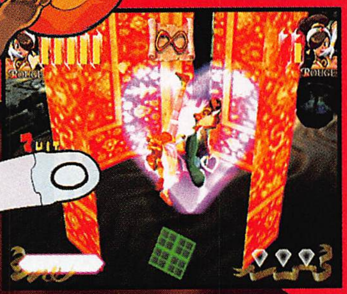


Hometown: Mahdad
The sexy lady may not be in the top tier of fighters, but her three Fusion attacks are very cool. Her Great Fire (not pictured) has a large area of affect, her Love Dance (below, right) does good damage, and her aerial Skull Fire (left) is one of the best-looking Power Fusions in the game.
Inspired by: *Firestar* (*Spiderman and his Amazing Friends*) and *Jasmine* (*Aladdin*).









laughing whenever I flatten an opponent with a mallet. 2D purists will find it very hard not to like *Power Stone's* Saturday morning cartoon look, and those that do, I suggest you crawl back to your hole and cover it with a big rock.

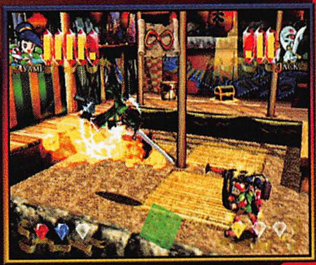
The most amazing thing about the visuals isn't the blazing special effects, the screaming frame-rate, or the uncanny attention to detail. Sculpting a 3D world, filled with objects to manhandle and pounce off of, while not suffering from visual difficulties is one tough job. *Ehrgeiz*, the only other game similar to *Power Stone*, pulled this off to some degree, but the camera in *Ehrgeiz* isn't as friendly as *Power Stone*'s. While you probably won't notice it during the frantic, action-filled brawls, the camera is constantly shifting, moving, and zooming for the optimal view.

*Power Stone* also makes good use of Z-buffering. Just make your character jump 'into' his lifebar, and you'll notice the bar dim out, enabling you to see where your character is. The same goes for objects like poles and beams that might block the player's view; they'll just "phase out" so you can see through them. This "user-friendly" camera is a subtle but very important feature that allows the player to concentrate on battle, rather than worry about where his character is. Because in a fighting game where you can't block, the last thing you want to worry about is not seeing your character.

**Tactical Fighting**

So, *Power Stone* is a visual feast for the eyes. But how does it play, without blocking? I admit when I first played the test version of this game at Sunnyvale Golfland, I too questioned the decision to omit a block button. Now, after mastering the game's subtle intricacies, the mere thought of a block button in this game is unfathomable. Removing the option of blocking automatically makes this game fast-paced and action-packed. You have to be on your toes at all times, watching for an opponent's attack, while avoiding explosions and keeping an eye out for useful weapons. It enforces constant movement and evasion, and

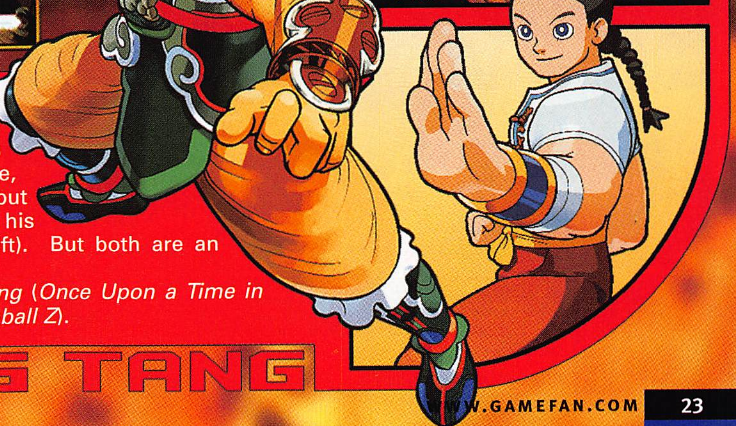








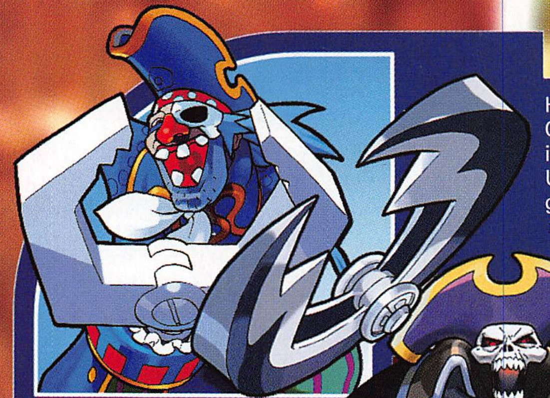






Hometown: Tong-An
ECM's favorite character is one of the best. His Great Dragon Ball (above, right) does good damage but is pretty easy to avoid, like his Heaven Military Dance (left). But both are an eye-widening experience.
Inspired by: *Wong Fei Hung* (*Once Upon a Time in China*) and *Gohan* (*Dragonball Z*).

# WANG TANG



# KRAKEN

Hometown: Skullhaven

One of the three bosses that you fight, Kraken isn't that fast, but he's pretty powerful. Unfortunately, his Power Drive moves are not good, and his Power Fusion attacks are only average. The Skull Soul (right) does average damage and his Skull Vacuum (below, left) is only effective when the target is close.

Inspired by: *Captain Hook* and *Dr. Claw*

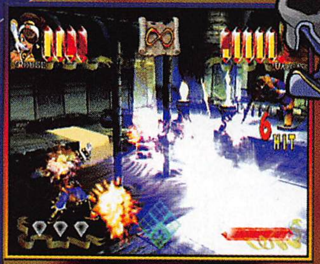




















those that try to muscle their way into the game will find themselves getting slammed and pulverized very quickly.

With true 3D environments and movement comes the problem of aiming and choosing what you're going to use. For example, if your fighter is facing two chairs, which one does he pick up, and how does he aim at a moving target? Capcom has handled these problems quite well. First off, fighters will always face their opponent's direction. So if you jump up and press kick, you will always head toward your opponent. The same goes for throwing objects, though you can also manually aim missiles to where you think your target is going. Interaction with objects — be it boxes, poles, or weapons — is done with common sense. Simply stand next to an item, and when it's highlighted with a circle (red for player 1 and blue for player 2) you can grab it or push it toward your enemy. All walls can be used as a springboard to jump higher, or to launch yourself at a target.

Even better, slamming enemies into walls will often cause paintings and other items to come crashing down! The level of background interaction is amazing, and *Power Stone* is one of the first fighting games in which you **have to** use the objects and environment to your advantage if you want to win.

But perhaps *Power Stone's* greatest accomplishment lies in the nature of the game. As noted above, there is a void in the 3D-fighting universe that's surrounded on either side by the hard-core *VF* players and the casual *Tekken* players. *Power Stone* fills this void by offering both parties a fighting game that is more tactical than skill-based — a weird mix of tag and chess.

At its simplest, *Power Stone* can be played by abusing jump kicks, depleting the Power Drive meter, and button mashing. At this early level of play, Power Fusion attacks are used as soon as all three Power Stones are acquired. After playing for some time, *Power Stone* becomes a tactical fighting game where you toss items not really to hit opponents, but to force them into a bad position or into making a mistake. At this level, it's a cat-and-mouse game where both players are trying desperately to keep each other from getting all three power stones; and once one does, they wait until the Power Drive Meter is nearly exhausted before using the Power Fusion attack. *Power Stone* is intuitive enough that casual players will jump on and have fun, while still having the hard-core elements which ninja gamers will practice for hours on end. The game is balanced enough that both types of players will appreciate it for being innovative and extremely fun.

### The Sound of Music

Music in fighting games has always been important to me, as the right kind of music at the right time can double the pleasure of a gaming experience. *Power Stone* is no exception, whether it's the excellent voice-acting of the characters or the classical arrangement of the music. Every character is distinct in design, and the voice-acting and music truly enhance their personality even further. From the high-pitched flute of Ayame to the driving snare-rhythms of Falcon, the cannon-like horns of Kraken to the mechanical clanking of Gunrock, each character's sounds add a lot to their personality, probably moreso than any fighting game since the days of *SFII*.

The sound effects are of equal caliber to the graphics, meaning they're frickin' awesome. From the resonating boom of a rocket explosion, to the bone-crushing snap of a wooden crate crashing into a target, the realism is incredible. It just seems like there's nothing wrong with *Power Stone*, right?

### Power Stone – The DC's diamond in the rough

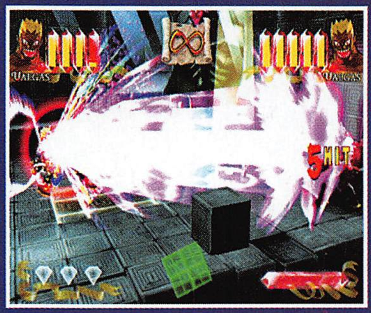
You're probably wondering how can I heap all this praise upon *Power Stone* without touching upon the game's flaws; fortunately, they're few and far between. One of the problems is the computer AI. Capcom fighting games aren't known for being particularly hard, but sometimes in *PS*, the computer AI will 'slip' — I've caught the computer running to



Dreamcast

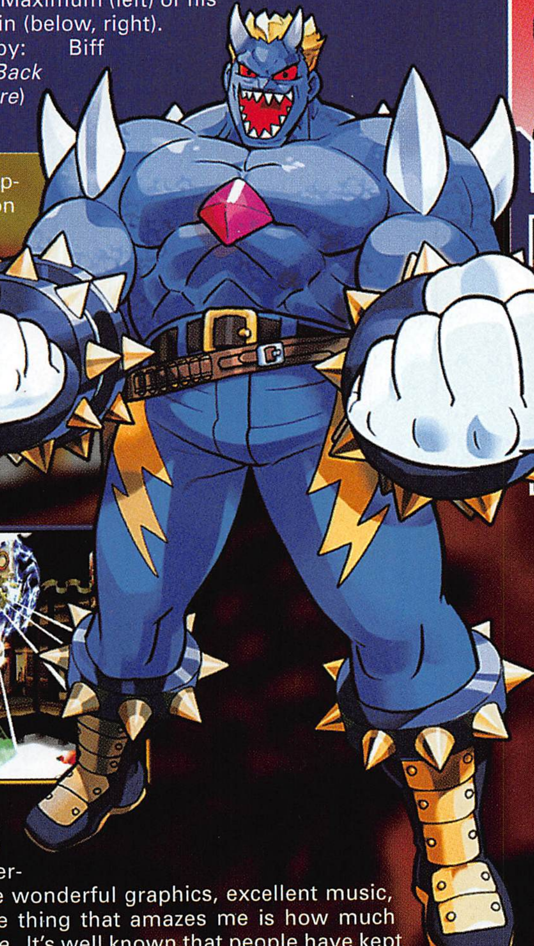
| REVIEW | DANGOHEAD: THE BEGINNING OF A NEW LEGEND | DEVELOPER - CAPCOM<br>PUBLISHER - CAPCOM | 1-2 PLAYERS<br>AVAILABLE 9/9/99 | VIEWPOINT SCORE :95 |
|---|---|---|---|---|

# VALGAS




Hometown: Avalon
Valgas is one mean mutha. He possesses great strength (equal to Gunrock) and extremely fast for his size. His moves in Power Drive form are also powerful, whether it's his Energy Maximum (left) or his Meteo Chain (below, right).
Inspired by: Biff Tannen (*Back to the Future*)





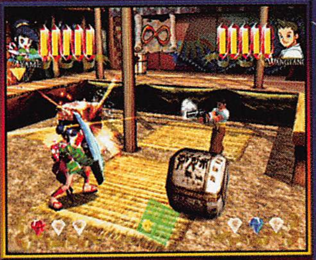



where a power stone will materialize before it happens. Also, the computer will do stupid things on occasion, like jump up and down in the same place.

*Power Stone's* biggest flaw lies not in what it has, but in what it doesn't have. An Internet link-up mode, so you can play versus friends online should've been implemented. I would've liked to have seen more gameplay options different from the arcade (e.g. Quest Mode). And lastly, while there are a lot of methods to attack your target, more normal special moves would've been appreciated.





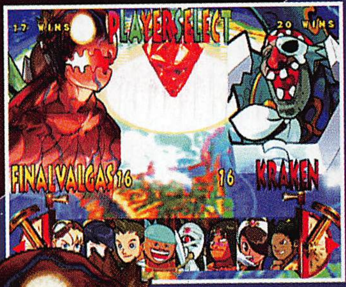




As Capcom's first fighting game on the Dreamcast, not only is *Power Stone* a quality product, but it's ground-breaking for a first generation title. Players will be mesmerized with the wonderful graphics, excellent music, and simple-yet-complex gameplay, but the one thing that amazes me is how much more you learn every time you play *Power Stone*. It's well known that people have kept reading Miyamoto Musashi's *Book of Five Rings* because every time they read it, they discover some new insight that they hadn't seen before. Each time I pick up *Power Stone*, I always discover something new, or I stumble across a new technique to use later. Much like an uncut gem, many will pick it up and marvel at its dazzling colors and appreciate its worth. But only experienced appraisers will shape the gem to their liking, finding the right areas to chisel, to discover the true treasure. Casual players will enjoy *Power Stone* for the impressive graphics, cool moves, and simple gameplay. But for those hardy adventurers who look beyond the simple gameplay and see the deep strategy, take the time to find and learn new techniques, and gaze deep within the "center of the gem," this treasure is theirs to keep.

*To this day, Dangohead claims he pulled his punches against ECM in the second round of the E3 Power Stone Tournament... though he has been known to refer to himself as a handsome man as well.*



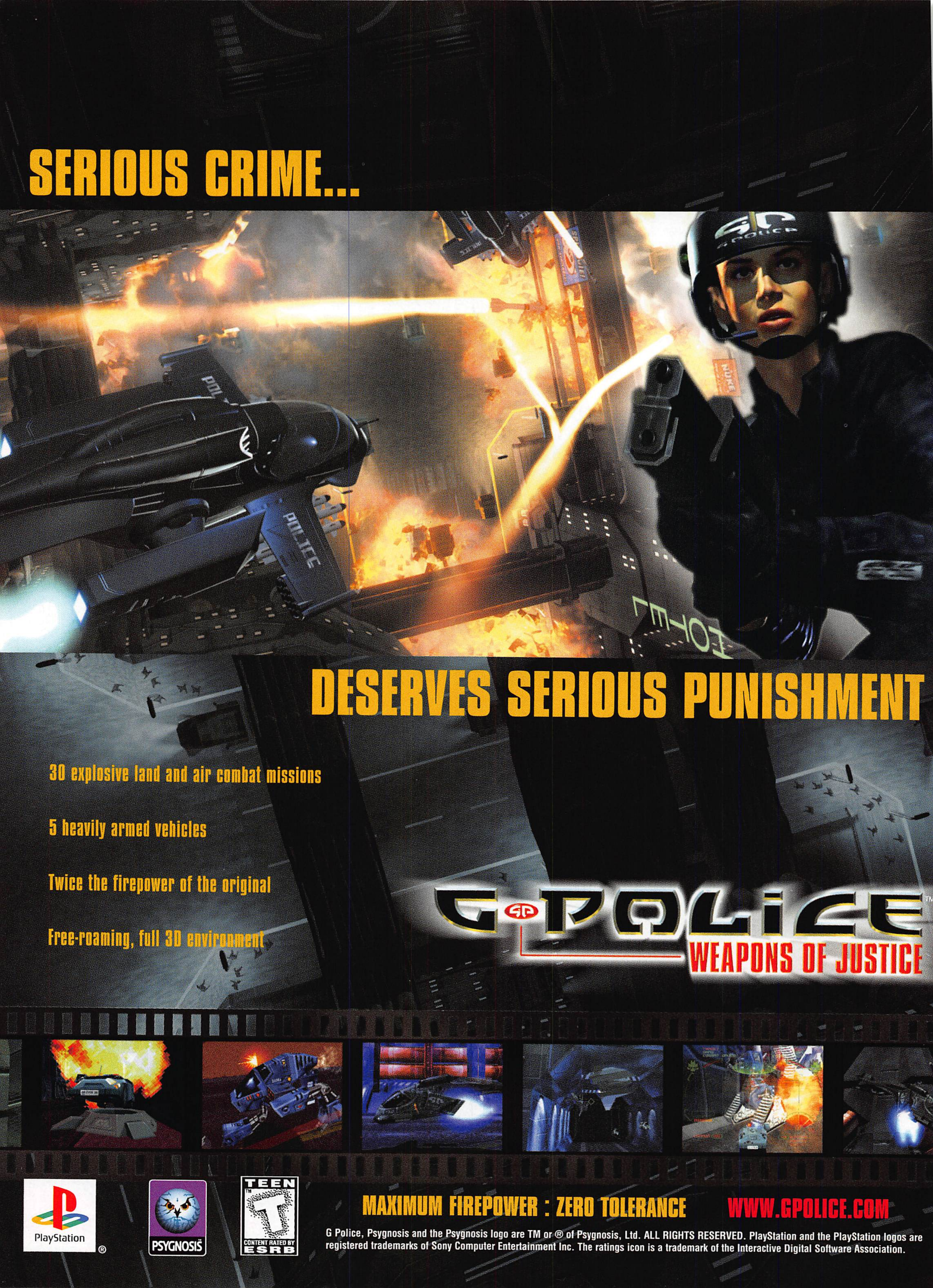



# FINAL VALGAS

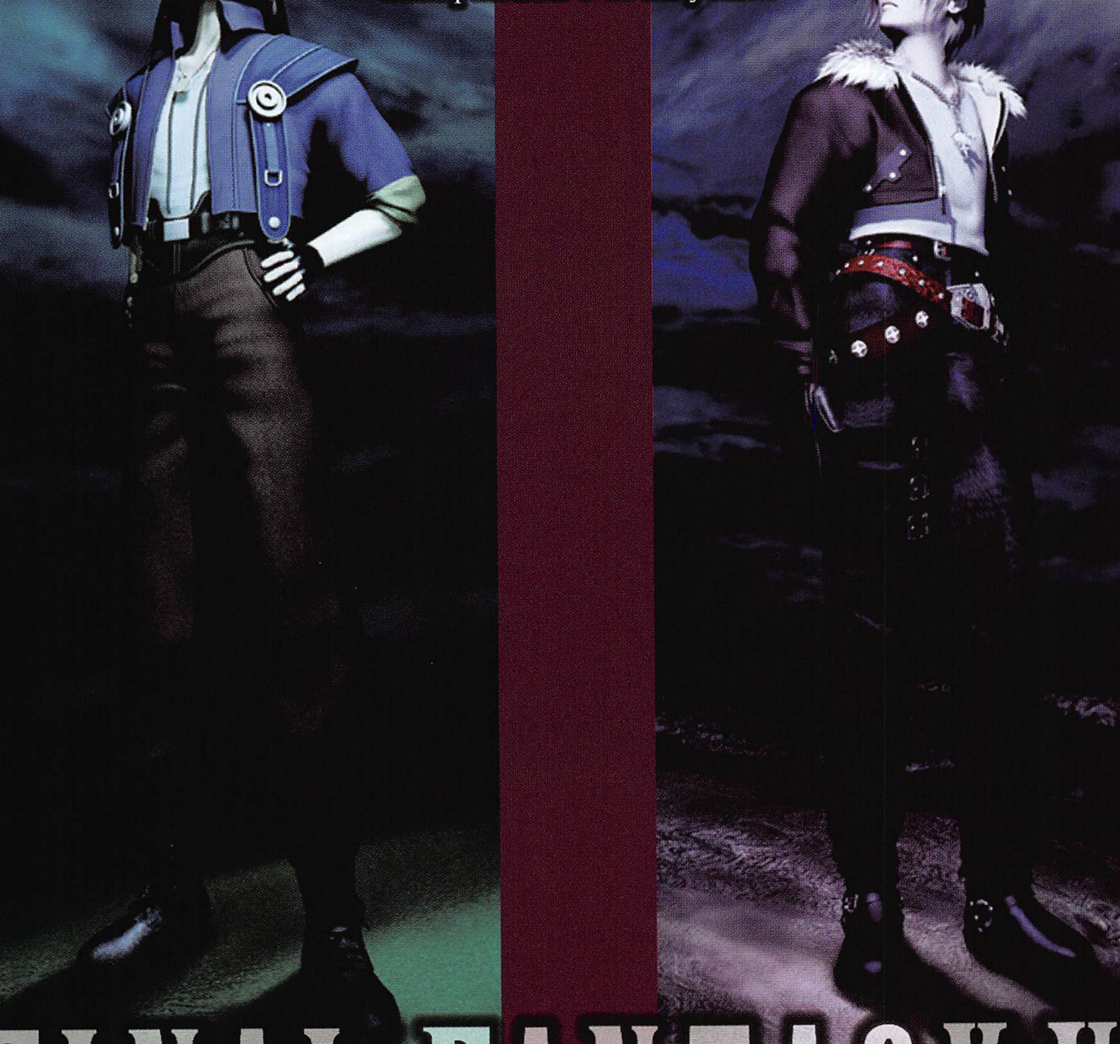





After defeating Valgas, you face an abomination even worst than... well, actually it's just a powered-up Valgas The Hutt. While he moves slowly, Final Valgas has some very powerful attacks. He can slap any foolish fighter into the wall, spit green acid from his maw, or grab and bite you (left). From afar, he can fire a powerful beam onto the ground, which erupts into liquid-hot magma (above) or fire explosive crystals whose shards are hard to avoid. And if that weren't enough, he fields blows like ECM takes short jokes (in other words, A LOT).


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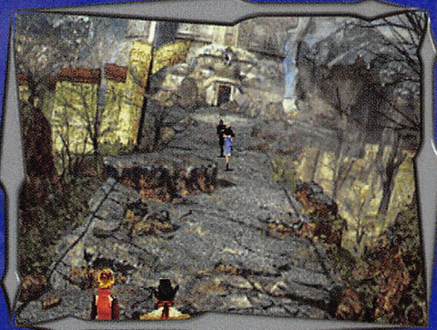
In the year of the RPG, the most talked about title is Final Fantasy VIII. Selling a staggering 2.5 million copies in four days to RPG-mad Japanese fans, this is the RPG world heavyweight champ. The flagship title from Square EA, FFVIII is the follow-up to the mega-popular FFVII, which received scores of 100+, 100+, and 100 in GameFan two years back. But does it live up to the hype? Turn the pages and find out, as GameFan reviews the most anticipated RPG of the year...



# FINAL FANTASY® VIII





### *Confessions of a Square Addict*

**Chapter 1: Trouble in Paradise...**

Ever since I played the Japanese version of *Final Fantasy VIII* earlier this year, people have been asking me, "Is *FFVIII* all that? Does it live up to the PR machine behind it? And is it better than *Final Fantasy VII*?" Now while I wanted to answer all these questions with a resounding "Yes! Of course!" and a look of disbelief ...I couldn't. Something wasn't sitting right, and for the longest time, I couldn't put my finger on it. So I continued to write preview after preview, proclaiming the wonders and innovations of this gigantic title...




**Chapter 2: The Breakdown**

Seeking some sort of repose, I found a quiet spot where I could sort through my thoughts and find out what was bothering me with *FFVIII*. What follows is a category-by-category comparison of this game with its predecessor *Final Fantasy VII* (a game which I would've scored 100).

**Story:** The focal point of a true RPG, this is what should make the gamer want to continue playing, even after finishing the game. Whereas *FFVII* had a convoluted story which didn't really make sense, *FFVIII* is a straight shooter. Although it takes a while for *VIII's* plot to kick in (doesn't really happen till the end of disc 2), and you're fed the story in **very** brief snippets. Depending on your point of view, it could be seen as a murder mystery slowly unfolding... or a master throwing his dog a Scooby Snack every so often. Although it develops a little slowly, the story in *VIII* is better than *VII*.




**In-Game Graphics:** While graphics shouldn't be a selling point for an RPG, they are important. Square knows how to deliver the goods here — *FFVII* and *VIII* are two of the best looking PlayStation games to this day. The pre-rendered backgrounds which you've seen in *Final Fantasy VII*, *Resident Evil 2*, and *Parasite Eve* are back with a vengeance; this time covering exotic, yet realistic locales such as: the ruins of Trabadia Garden (a city devastated by a missile strike), the lighthouse near Edea's beach house, or the coastal getaway town of Balamb (reminiscent of Costa Del Sol in *FFVII*). Plus, the backgrounds now have more ambient effects (such as animation and lighting) than ever before.

Characters are now full-sized, having grown up and abandoned their super-deformed roots. While I'm not crazy about the full-bodied look, it's really important to many people. I've heard people express interest in playing the game now that the characters aren't short and squat any more; and it's more consistent when they're the same size in town, CG, and battle, as opposed to *VII*, in which they switched from SD to normal-sized frequently. With an extra two years of experience under their belt, the artists at Square have sculpted what's arguably the best looking domestic PlayStation title this year. Score another point for *FFVIII*.





FINAL FA

| R REVIEW | EGGO: The, uh, w-eight is over. | Developer - Squaresoft | 1 Player | Viewpoint Score :88 |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | Publisher - Square EA | Available Sept. 7th | |

**Computer Graphics**: Square RPGs are becoming more cinematic and mainstream with every outing; just look at games like *Parasite Eve*, *FFVIII*, and *Vagrant Story*. This is also because Square's CG artists are among the best in the biz. Every time a CG sequence comes up, people wandering by stop to gawk and ask questions. As with the in-game graphics, the CG has gotten better with time, and *FFVIII* does more of that meshing polygon characters with CG than ever before. Every time the graphics switch from pre-rendered to CG or back, I'm left in jaw-dropping awe. Speaking of jaw-dropping, *FFVIII* has a CG ending which is just mind-blowing; it could be the best ending you'll ever see in a video game. *FFVIII* wins this category hands-down.









**Music:** This has been a classic gripe ever since the series debuted on the PlayStation. I liked Nobuo Uematsu's 16-bit efforts (*FFII* and *III*) **much** more than his 32-bit work (*FFVII* and *VIII*). Both *VII* and *VIII* had their moments of brilliance, but the majority of music in either of them isn't very memorable. The same can't be said for the scores of *FFII* or *III*, assuming you played them back in the day. I once wrote that it'd be hard to go back and play a game like *FFII* today, with games looking as good as *Sonic Adventure*, *Power Stone*, and *Shen Mue* out there. Well, when I started playing *FFII* (*IV* in Japan) in *Final Fantasy Collection*, I quickly ate those words because the game still plays well, and the music is so good that I kept playing just to hear more. I nearly wept upon hearing Nobuo in his prime again, and you too can take a stroll down memory lane when Square EA releases *Final Fantasy Anthology* later this year (although *II* isn't in it... grrr...).

Enough dwelling on the past; like I said earlier, *VIII* has its moments. The sword fight in the intro between Squall and Seifer is set to the best music track in the game — *Liberi Fatali*, which marks the return of the 'Sephiroth choir' (good to see they're still getting work). Also, famous Hong Kong pop singer and professional music sampler, Faye Wong, sings the game's theme/love song, *Eyes on Me*. Faye's my favorite HK singer, so it's no surprise that *Eyes on Me* gets lots of play time from me (much to the chagrin of the other *GF* staffers). But once you get beyond *Liberi* and *Eyes*, most of the music in *FFVIII* is pretty sleepy. *VII*'s soundtrack wasn't exactly mind-blowing, but it had more good songs than *VIII*; so score this one for *VII*.









ITASY® VIII

**Characters:** Tetsuya Nomura, character designer for this game, is also known for his work in *FFVII* and *Parasite Eve*. This time out, similar to *PE*, the characters are all very much based in reality. You'll get no guys with 'guns for a hand' like Barret or talking dogs like Red XIII. They're all normal-looking citizens who you'd pass on the street without a second glance... well, maybe Edea would warrant a stare, but not the rest of 'em. I didn't mind the 'average guy' look of *Parasite Eve*, because it was set in the urban landscape of New York. But last I checked, there's a "fantasy" in this series' title. So where exactly is the fantasy in this *Final Fantasy*? What's with the high-tech scenery and realism? They should've named the game *Final Phantasy* instead.









Unfortunately, I don't like the realism of the characters in this game, and I don't like their personalities. I can't shake the feeling of *déjà vu* either. Squall is like Cloud with brown hair, a scar, and a trigger on his sword. The Moombas are distant relatives of Red XIII. And Rinoa is like Tifa in a blue dress. At least *FFVII's* characters were somewhat original the first time around. Not only that, but I can't stand Squall's personality. To every question or statement he comes across, his reaction is always the same: apathy. He'll just shrug and say, "Whatever." Now how am I supposed to care about a character who doesn't care about anything? It's truly hard to empathize with him, even when he does find something to care about. Character design is easily better in *FFVII*.

**Innovation/Gameplay:** *FFVIII* brings many new ideas to the table when it comes to gameplay. Let's start with magic. The classic system of keeping track of MPs and using ethers to replenish your mana has been replaced with single-use magic spells and perishable callers. I'll get to the callers later, but magic is now drawn out of monsters in combat or taken from draw points in towns. While it was incredibly tedious to draw in the playable demo of *FFVIII*, thankfully it's been made convenient in the final. Single draws can land you over 10 spells at a time, plus it happens faster, so you don't have to sit in a battle for eternity trying to 'earn' magic. I prefer the magic system of old, but drawing isn't too bad.







While drawing is now convenient, junctioning is a major hassle. I'm all for customizing my RPGs, and I loved the level of detail in *Star Ocean: The Second Story*. But the customizing in *SO:TSS* was completely voluntary, meaning you didn't need to do it to beat the game; unfortunately, junctioning is required to do anything in *FFVIII*. Without guardian forces junctioned to magic spells and whatnot, your characters enter battle with only one command: fight. You can't even use items! The hassle comes when GFs are mysteriously removed without warning during the course of the game. This usually happens after a major event or when you switch control to another party. Then you have to go back and re-equip everybody again, lest you run the risk of entering battle with only the "fight" command. The worst part is, normal weapons are severely underpowered until the end of the game, when they become significantly upgraded. So playing without junctioning your GFs is just impossible.




Another problem brought on by innovation is play balance. As I mentioned earlier, normal attacks are incredibly weak early in the game, dealing 50 or so points of damage. On the other hand, if you use a Guardian Force caller like Shiva, you can easily deal damage in excess of 1000 points. The trick is learning an ability called "boost" which increases the amount of damage your caller does, depending on how fast you tap the button. With a good boost, you can deal more than double damage with every GF summon.

Every time KidFan walked by me as I played this game, he'd see me jamming away on a button as I boosted my GF. "What is this, *Track and Field 2000*?" he'd say. And, in a way, he had a point because much of the "gameplay" in *FFVIII* consists of rapid button presses and continually summoning GFs. This is disturbing, considering GFs are so much more powerful than normal attacks or regular magic. Game balance just isn't there if you want to finish the game with a clock time less than 99:59. *FFVII*, on the other hand, was balanced enough that you could go through the game relying on either summons, magic, or fighting with weapons. Despite the many attempts at innovation in *FFVIII*, credit *FFVII* with having the better, more balanced gameplay. *VII* was also quite innovative, with the dramatic battle camera angles, over-the-top caller spells, and the cinematic feel.

**Final Score: a 3-3 tie between *FFVII* and *FFVIII*.**

So after analyzing it category by category, I still couldn't decide whether *FFVIII* was better than *VII*. Something was amiss... something I couldn't put my finger on. By the way, if the comparison seems a bit harsh, it's because I'm comparing *FFVIII* to a game which I would've scored 100. So keep that in mind.

## Chapter 3: Revelation

Then one day, I received the e-mail. Sent by someone known only as Riisuke, its subject line gave voice to the nameless feeling that continued to trouble me. The subject was simply, "Does *FFVIII* have soul?" And just like that, I had found what it was — the problem that continually bothered me whenever I thought of the game. The e-mail went on to ask not only was the game good, but if it had that oomph... that charm... that nameless quality which older titles like *Final Fantasy II* and *III* had (*IV* and *VI* in Japan). My reply was a very abrupt "No." It doesn't, and that's a problem.













Don't get me wrong. There are definitely memorable moments in the game that make it worth playing, such as the ends of all the discs, or the first time you see the new Tonberry and Cactrot (I'll leave those as surprises for you). But that intangible element of "soul" is missing from this game. If you haven't played some of the classic RPGs, then you won't understand what I'm talking about. But I hope you have. Then you'll see that *Final Fantasy VIII* is a good game... but not a great one, not compared to the classics. There are two *Final Fantasy* titles coming out this season. And while *FFVIII* is worth playing, *Final Fantasy Anthology* is the better of the two.

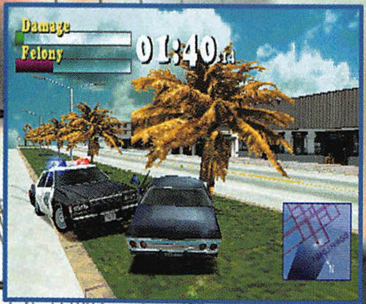
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*Shortly after completing this review, Eggo went into hiding somewhere in Canada, seeking refuge from angry mobs of torch-bearing Square-heads.*















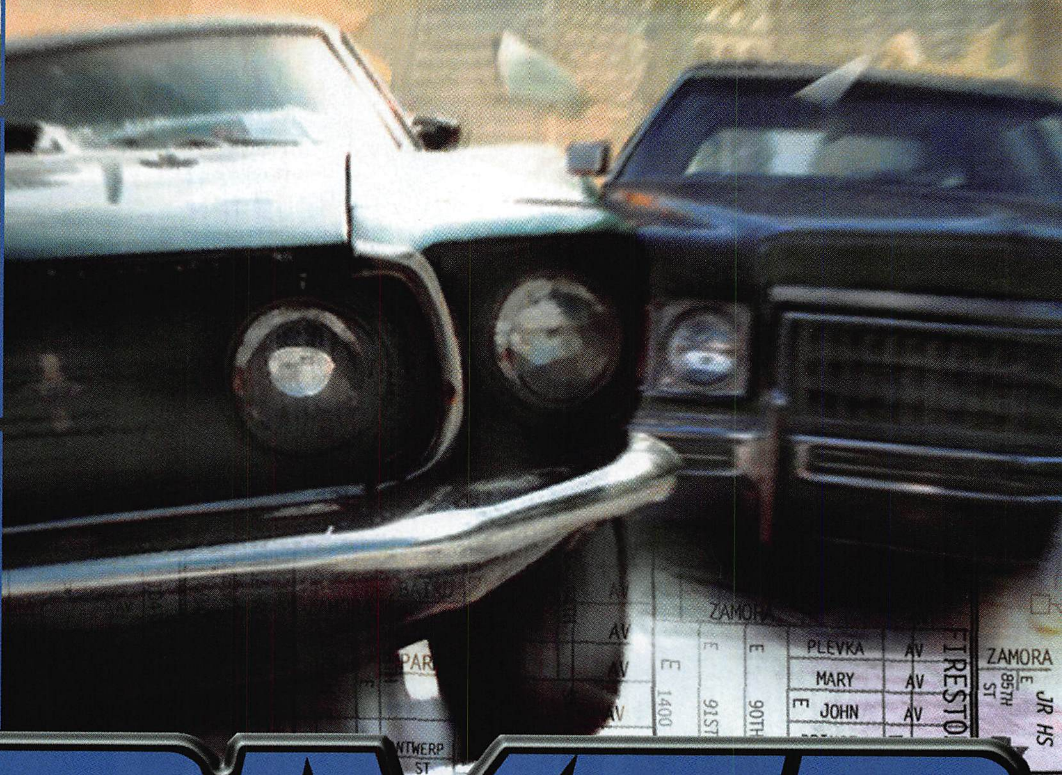

It's been a while since I've played a game that's challenged me as much as *Driver*. Put it this way: The game's training mission, which you have to pass in order to start the actual game, is pretty difficult, especially if you're picking up the game for the first time. After much ribbing from my backseat gaming co-workers and wrecking countless cars, I finally focused my ninja skills, the moons were in alignment, and I accomplished my rite of passage into driving manhood.

Once you pass that kidney stone of a training mission, you start receiving assignments on the answering machine in Tanner's apartment. Oh yeah, if you're new to this whole *Driver* thing, you play Tanner, an undercover cop posing as a bad guy... but not your ordinary bad guy. He's a behind-the-wheel bad guy. <Gasp!> I know what you're thinking... livin' in L.A., Eggo must be used to criminals behind the wheel. Oh no, Tanner isn't your ordinary punk who cuts you off and follows it up with obscene gestures. Instead, he's the guy driving the getaway car for bank robbers... the one outrunning cops in Fox's *Scariest Police Chases*. That's you... in *Driver*... minus the pursuing helicopters.

To their credit, Reflections has sculpted an amazingly realistic game here. *Driver's* four cities (Miami, Los Angeles, New York, and San Francisco) are modeled after the actual city locales; there are working stoplights at every intersection; and all the NPC cars obey the standard rules of traffic. But just because the civilian cars obey the law doesn't mean they all drive the same. There's the granny drivers, the "they must be drunk" drivers, the speed demons, the easily passed, and... <dum dum dum> the fuzz! The heat, pigs, smokey... whatever you call 'em, the police are bad news for a wheelman trying to make a clean getaway. They'll cling to you like frosting on a donut, pursuing you to the ends of the earth... or until their car gets so totaled that they can't follow any more. There's nothing like the feeling of swerving to avoid an oncoming car, then looking behind you and seeing a cop eat it. You can almost see him shaking his fist in frustration as you pull away... But just because you avoided one cop, or even two, doesn't mean the backup won't get you, or that roadblock up ahead...

Being chased O.J.-style by a police caravan and rushing to a destination is exhilarating to a point, but that adrenaline rush wears off when you see how repetitious the missions become. Two minutes to get from point A to point B with cops on my tail? Hmm... seems an awful lot like the assignment before that... and the one before that... Because the gameplay is monotonous, *Driver* doesn't rise above mediocrity. Even the director's cam, which lets you record your exploits and view it from different camera angles (like a music video), doesn't make this game worthy of a purchase.

*Eggo frequently avoids near-crashes, cuts people off, and dodges cops driving to work everyday.*



# DRIVER

| R REVIEW | EGGO: No cell phones in this game I hope... | Developer - Reflections / Publisher - GT Interactive | 1 Player / Available Now | Viewpoint Score: 76 |
|---|---|---|---|---|




THIS IS THE HEART.


TEEN
T
CONTENT RATED BY ESRB
Sega Dreamcast

# wipEout 3







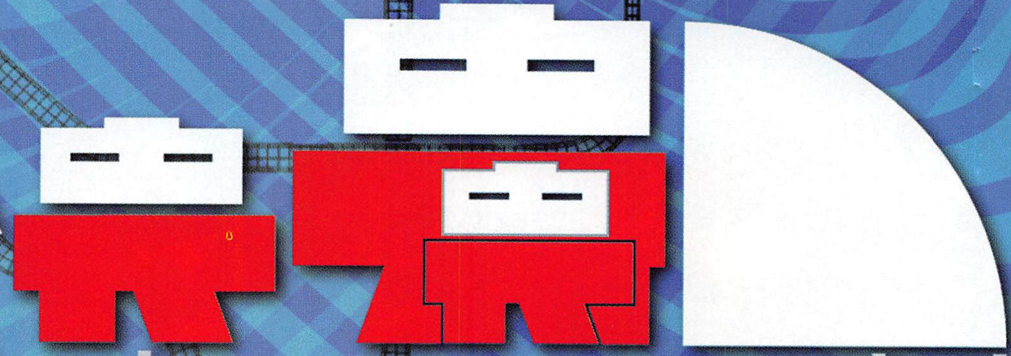
WipeOut has been a favorite of mine since its 1995 release. It was one of a kind, with nothing like it around. I'd always find time to sneak in a quick game before work or class. Believe you me, I spent much of late '95 and early '96 in front of a PlayStation because of my *WipeOut* addiction. *WipeOut XL* (*WipeOut 2097* in the UK) followed it up with better track designs, extra options, and more forgiving wall collisions. And who can forget the tunes done by top DJs from here and abroad in the soundtrack for *XL*? Well, Pysgnosis is currently adding the finishing touches to *WipeOut 3*, and you've all heard the phrase "third time's the charm..."

Too many sequels surface with only minor changes from their respective prequels. I can't stress enough how I hate playing essentially the same game I played a year before. *WipeOut XL*'s massive improvements over *WipeOut* don't compare to the huge jump that is *WipeOut 3*. Every possible aspect of the game has been reconstructed in some shape or form. The higher resolution is obvious as soon as you see the game. Three new racing teams — Asseqai, Goteki, and Icarus — bring the total number of teams up to eight. All the existing team's crafts have been redesigned and look better than ever. A dozen weapons (seven new, five old) aid you while driving through eight new courses in four racing classes. The ultra speedy Rapier and Phantom classes scream along faster than ever before. World-renowned DJ Sasha has been commissioned to compose the musical score as well as choose talent from the rave scene fitting of the *WipeOut* moniker. All in all, I'd say there's more than enough here for you to shake a stick at.

A stack of options a mile high doesn't add up to much when the game is devoid of fun. *WipeOut* is one of my favorite series, and with *WipeOut 3*, it will continue to remain high on my list of frequently played games. Why? Because it's incredibly fun to play. I picked up *WO3* and played it for practically an entire day, and this is a far-from-complete preview version. A split-screen (vertical or horizontal) two-player mode doubles the fun and doesn't kill the frame rate or presentation, though not all the pieces are in place yet. Only vertical split-screen was available at press time, but a horizontal split-screen is guaranteed to be in the final. Waka and I spent a large portion of the day speeding through Porto Tora, Stanza Inter, and the rest of the *WO3* tracks in two-player mode. Get ready to sign yourself up for Anti-Gravity Racing. C




**I picked up WO3 and played it for practically an entire day...**



let's be friends!
aq-5
INTERNATIONAL













Virgin's *Thrill Kill* came like rolling thunder through serene mountains, shocking an industry as jaded as our own. I, for one, was bothered that EA chose not to release it, even if under the Virgin label. Word of *Thrill Kill*'s demise spread like wild fire, with an obscene amount of piracy occurring through the Internet and other sources. *Thrill Kill* garnered instant cult status within the industry and from the hard-core.

*Thrill Kill* buffs will be all over *Wu Tang* like a cheap suit. Activision has solicited the talents of Paradox to design what would essentially be *Thrill Kill 2*. While the hip-hop group Wu Tang serves as building blocks to create a decidedly Asian mythos not unlike Dave Carradine — Shaolin Style. Members of the band reprise their roles, except this time, instead of keeping a phat beat, they beat you senseless. I'm not a fan of the band nor am I familiar with its members, but they sure do a good job of kicking some booty. Personalities like RZA, GZA, Raekwon, and the rest of the crew fight it out in temples, airplane

# Killa Bees Are Coming!

hangars, and other unconventional battlefields. Of course, there's also a ton of hidden characters and secret arenas you'll need to unlock. Of the playable cast, I liked Ol' Dirty and Wuji the most. The duo displayed, in gangsta-speak, some mad skills in the combo department. Other characters, like RZA, are more into thug tactics with cheap, long range hits and special attacks. Aside from the rap-fu influence, this is still *Thrill Kill*. The combos and system remain untouched in many ways. Extra time means a tighter moving game. The additional development time has afforded Paradox the luxury of upping the graphics without harming the game speed.

While it's too early to pass final judgement on *Wu Tang*, I'd have to say *Thrill Kill* was more fun, even in its unfinished state. The characters were wackier and more universally appealing. I don't like juggle combos "by-design," though the designers at Paradox are probably tweaking the combos as I write this. I don't know about you, but I take great pleasure and pride in finding my own combos, not a combo designed to be discovered. I'll wait for the review to give you the concrete call on what I think of *Wu Tang*. Killa beez are coming! **C**



WU-TANG

SHAOLIN STYLE



| | | |
|---|---|---|
| Developer - Paradox | 1-4 Players | Cerberus: Thrill |
| Publisher - Activision | Available Fall | Kill didn't die in vain! |

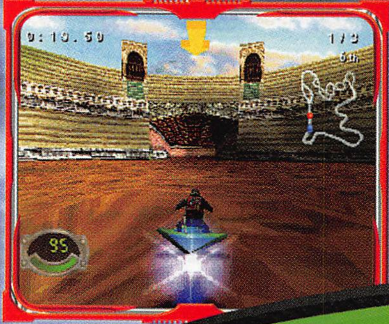
P PREVIEW

UNDER CONSTRUCTION

PlayStation











There's a ton of stuff I want to do before I die and there are a couple of things in life I wish I could do, but aren't possible. One would be to ride hover-boards like the ones seen in *Back to the Future*; the other is to man those super-sonic speeder-bikes seen in *Return of the Jedi* or maybe something similar. I know I'm more likely to become a millionaire before ever riding either hover-boards or speeder-bikes. So I'll take what I can get, and *Jet Moto 3* is a pretty good depiction of what it'd be like jetting through a narrow canyon at breakneck speeds.

A game has to sell good numbers for a publisher to even consider pursuing a sequel; a third game, more than not, signifies that a franchise must be kickin' butt to continue. *Jet Moto* must have a large following of players. I can see why; there's a lot to like about this game. *Jet Moto 3* pushes the mark set by the first two games even further. 989 Studios has a brand new 3D engine that is more efficient, increasing performance drastically. What this means to you and me are sharper textures and larger courses with a game running at about 30 frames per second. Courses can range from volcanic islands to desert wastelands to frozen raceways. Close to a dozen bikes and riders will give enough selection for acceleration, top speed, and handling — but how does a hovercraft handle at all if it's not on the ground? I can't tell you how a hovercraft can handle, but I can tell you that the control is perfect. *Jet Moto 3* supports digital and analog support. I prefer the precision of the analog control. Thumb sticks control your pitch and yaw. The L1 and R1 buttons shift the rider from side to side. While airborne the L1 and R1 buttons control your roll.

989 has made a step in the right direction with the course designs for *Jet Moto 3*. Each course has more of a race course feel instead of a sense of being put together haphazardly by some wayward designer. The courses found in the previous games in the series felt more like obstacle courses than racetracks. 2-Player mode runs at a speedy pace, but for me this is strictly a one-player affair. Not that 2-player mode isn't fun, I'm just selfish. C



# Jet Moto 3®







UNDER CONSTRUCTION

P PREVIEW

| CERBERUS: It's time to catch some air on a jet bike. | Developer - 989 Studios | 1-2 Players |
|---|---|---|
| | Publisher - 989 Studios | Available Sept. |


GEX 3
DEEP COVER GECKO
NINTENDO 64
GEX
Get Ready to Rumble on the N64!
27 HUGE, twisted levels including three N64-exclusive levels
Brand-new TONGUE SWING found only on the N64
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Three secret playable characters and loads of hidden surprises
Large 256Mb cart equals bigger levels and more GEX wisecracks
"GEX 3 tailwhips all the right buttons —variety, humor, depth, and graphics"
-NINTENDO POWER
NINTENDO 64
EVERYONE
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Mercenaries; intrigue; the end of the world; and guns, guns, guns! What more could a gamer ask for? *Fear Factor* will attempt to deliver an exciting adventure featuring all of these components... and maybe a few more surprises, to boot.

You have received word that a powerful Chinese businessman's daughter has gone on the lam. Smelling an opportunity, you and you partner decide to go in, locate the girl, and then ransom her back to the old guy. Seems like an easy enough job for a top-notch bunch of mercenaries like yourselves. Ahh, but the best laid plans...



Very quickly, things begin to go wrong. You come under heavy fire almost immediately, losing your helicopter (and only means of escape from a huge skyscraper) before you are even situated on the roof. You get split up from your partner and then, as if things weren't already bad enough, it starts to get weird... really weird. A quick kidnapping has turned into a full-scale battle to survive and to save the world.

Exciting stuff, to say the least. *Fear Factor* plans to pull off this adrenaline-soaked adventure by connecting each level with a set of seamless movies meant to not only propel the action, but tell the story as well. The anime-style presentation will interest many gamers and really helps set the "neo-megalopolis" backdrop which *Fear Factor* is set in. This story could easily be taking place in the same universe as *Shadowrun*, *Blade Runner*, or *Akira*.

Much like *Tomb Raider*, or even *Resident Evil* for that matter, there is plenty of skulking around, trying to outwit enemies and navigate treacherous terrain. There is plenty of blasting, too. You're a double fisted, gun-toting badass, John Woo-style, so expect the blood to flow like rivers when things get hairy. A great little feature is a new weapon AI that will help target enemies as you swivel around in combat.

You will periodically switch roles, from one mercenary to the other, throughout the game. The switches take place during the aforementioned cut scenes and greatly help in the presentation of *Fear Factor* as an interactive movie. The goal is to have each of the mercs play differently, adding depth and variety to the title.

While *Fear Factor* may not have what it takes to topple Lara as the newest Eidos franchise, it certainly opens up the opportunity for Eidos to focus on what is, quite frankly, an infinitely more interesting parallel universe. Expect to hear some buzz around this game in the coming months. **EN**



| P PREVIEW | EL NIÑO: THEY SHOULDA CALLED IN THE A-TEAM... | DEVELOPER - KRONOS<br>PUBLISHER - EIDOS | 1 PLAYER<br>AVAILABLE 4TH QTR. |
|---|---|---|---|











# QUAKE II

I guess you could say that I know the game of *Quake 2*. For seven months, it had eaten up more of my time than any other video game, prompting ECM and Dango to call for an "intervention" meeting. The meeting went well and I realized that I didn't need *Q2* in order to lead a happy, fulfilling life. To help me kick the habit, Waka suggested that I start playing a game called *EverQuest*, to curb my cravings...

Like a recovered alcoholic, I sat at the Activision party and watched the developers demo the PlayStation version of *Quake 2*, leery all the while. I wasn't going to play it because I knew the kind of trouble that it represented. And I woulda successfully avoided it all night if it weren't for the fact that Activision was not releasing early copies of the game, so the only way for *GameFan* to have a chance to preview it was for me to play, being the only *GF* ed there. So I had to take one for the team...

It's like riding a bike, or so they say, although I wasn't able to bring my "A" game because the PlayStation version has all new deathmatch levels. While I can't say that the design was better than the original DM maps, they will certainly offer a fine mix of strategy and excitement for those unfamiliar with The Edge, Tokay's Towers, and The Frag Pipe. The maps are small, in order to keep the game from bogging, and you won't run into the problem of too much open space for multi-player (*GoldenEye's* one weak point).

Surprisingly, this version runs better than the N64 one. There is little to no slow-down in either the one player contest or deathmatch, and all of the weapons retain the proper special effects (dig that railgun trail!). At this point the only problems I have encountered deal with control. Don't panic, this is not to say the game controls poorly, because it doesn't. However, veteran *Q2*-ers will notice that making the ever-important 180 spin shot is now next to impossible; the PlayStation pad wasn't built for that kind of speedy movement and control, so expect to take a rocket up the kiester more frequently.

*Quake 2* is one of the greatest pure gameplay experiences ever, and this version manages to embody most of what made the PC version a classic. For those of you who have yet to experience *Quake 2* on a computer, definitely get excited about this. The PlayStation needs a good corridor shooter.

Oh, by the way, I managed to avoid becoming re-addicted after my brief relapse at the Activision party. Now if you'll excuse me, *EverQuest* awaits... **EN**

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| DEVELOPER - HAMMERHEAD | 1-4 PLAYERS | EL NIÑO: TO FRAG OR NOT TO |
| PUBLISHER - ACTIVISION | AVAILABLE FALL | FRAG. THAT IS THE QUESTION. |

P PREVIEW



In a genre more stale than a month old cookie, it is refreshing to see a title that dares to be different. No cars, no motorcycles, no hover boards... just snowmobiles. Although it may strike some as unusual that EA would develop a title that wasn't connected to some over-hyped license, this would-be niche game will undoubtedly be marketed out the wazoo, showing up on every ESPN2 commercial break and being slammed down our throats. This would be agitating if it wasn't for the fact that *Sled Storm* is deserving of as much publicity as it can garner.

This is one helluva fun game, folks. Not only is it novel to be able to race snowmobiles, but the quality of the game is exceptional, giving it the kind of longevity that, quite frankly, many racing games lack. For starters, the graphics are stellar. Not only do the backgrounds and ski-doos look great, the frame-rate is running at about 30, dropping nary a bit in split-screen mode (3 and 4-player modes are a different story...). And night, snow and rain add a nice atmospheric effect, as well.

The gameplay is what highlights *Sled Storm*, though. The control is responsive and the physics give the sleds a very real feel. The trick mechanism is easy to use (although don't expect the tricks to be very dazzling... they *are* on a snowmobile, after all), and the track design is wonderful, making each course challenging as well as including many hidden shortcuts and alternate routes.

There are a total of 14 tracks, divided into two sets of courses: Open Mountain and SnoCross. The Open Mountain tracks offer more exciting challenges, as they are cut right out of the surroundings, while the SnoCross tracks are artificial, designed for circuit racing.

A Championship Mode will allow you to race through a season while upgrading your sled, using money you earn from victories and tricks. The number of possible upgrades is plentiful, and when you max out your sled, expect that thing to blaze!

Also of note is the game's soundtrack, which includes remixes of such songs as Rob Zombie's *Dragula* and Econoline Crush's *Surefire*. Great music to get you in the racing mood...

*Sled Storm* is a fantastic racing game that shouldn't be missed by anyone. An exciting and challenging title, it is sure to keep you busy for many, many hours. *Sled Storm*'s well worth the price.

*Not since his days in his mountain pueblo has El Niño seen snow drifts so deep.*



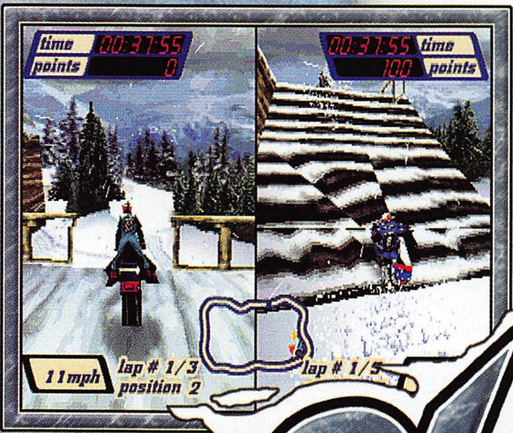






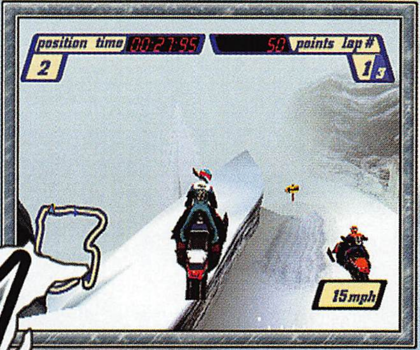








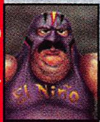





# SLED STORM




PlayStation



| REVIEW | EL NIÑO: HEY LOOK, AN ORIGINAL RACING GAME! | DEVELOPER - EA CANADA<br>PUBLISHER - ELECTRONIC ARTS | 1-4 PLAYERS<br>AVAILABLE NOW | VIEWPOINT SCORE: 89 |
|---|---|---|---|---|


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According to the Chinese calendar, 1999 will be the year of the *Army Men*. Or at least, 3DO would certainly like to think so. This year will see at least three *Army Men* titles on several platforms. *Air Attack* uses the *Army Men* universe and spins off into a free-roaming shooter not unlike *Nuclear Strike*. The main difference here would be that you're not capping terrorist baddies, just plastic toys and wandering insects.

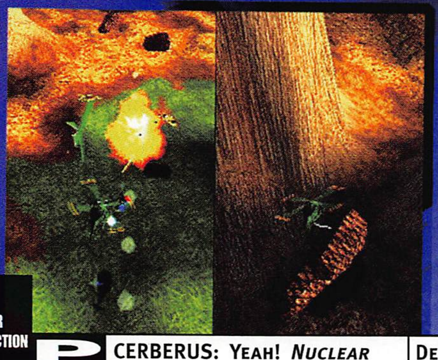
*Air Attack* introduces Captain, leader of the Air Cavalry and all-around good guy. Along with Sarge, both Green warriors will save prisoners of war, complete covert missions, and wreak havoc on the Tan forces. Melting Tan army men instead of real people is a good edge for 3DO. What safer way to avoid the tyranny of Congressional fanatics and the evils of IDSA than by averting the problem from the get-go. Instead of battles over Iraq, *Air Attack* takes place on picnic blankets, ice cream stands, and backyards.

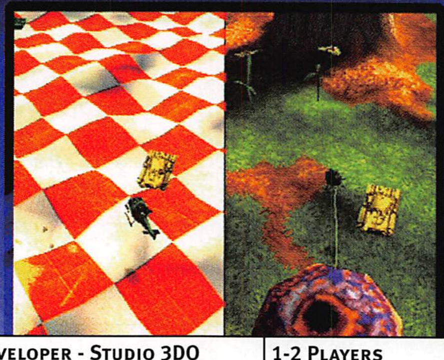
A stable of four choppers (Apache, Chinook, Super Stallion and a Huey) is at the Captain's disposal through 18 one and two-player missions. Each of the helicopters has very specific characteristics. For instance, the Huey is fast but won't take as much of a beating as the Super Stallion or Apache. One of five co-pilots can also affect the feel of your craft and the success of your mission. All 18 missions can be played in 2-player split-screen cooperative mode. The four other 2-player modes are of a competitive nature. Capture The Flag is what the name implies; whoever manages to seize the opposing person's flag first wins. Tic-Tac-Toe takes a violent turn in Tic-Tac-Blow, a fusion of battle with the age old game. Kinda cool idea if you ask me, fighting for control of the Tic squares. Wanton destruction reigns supreme in *Air Raid*, both players must demolish as much as possible in a limited amount of time. *Air Rescue* forces one to rescue as many people as possible — first player to reach a total wins.

Multi-player modes are a blast (no pun intended), whether you're on the same team or not. Still, an occasional pot shot never hurts. More often than not, a co-op game can turn into a same-side battle. *Air Attack's* coolest feature has to be the Winch, a commonly used grappling device for helicopters. The Winch can lift objects such as aluminum cans, flowers, enemy structures and more. These objects can then be placed wherever you see fit. Moreover, some missions require extended use of the Winch. I can't wait to see a version that is closer to final. Just makes you want to hum *Flight of the Valkyries*... **C**

**Melting tan army men instead of real people is a good edge.**

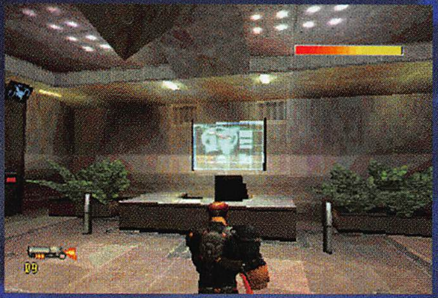
# ARMY MEN™ AIR ATTACK™







| | | |
|---|---|---|
| CERBERUS: Yeah! *Nuclear Strike meets Small Soldiers*! | Developer - Studio 3DO | 1-2 Players |
| | Publisher - The 3DO Company | Available Winter |





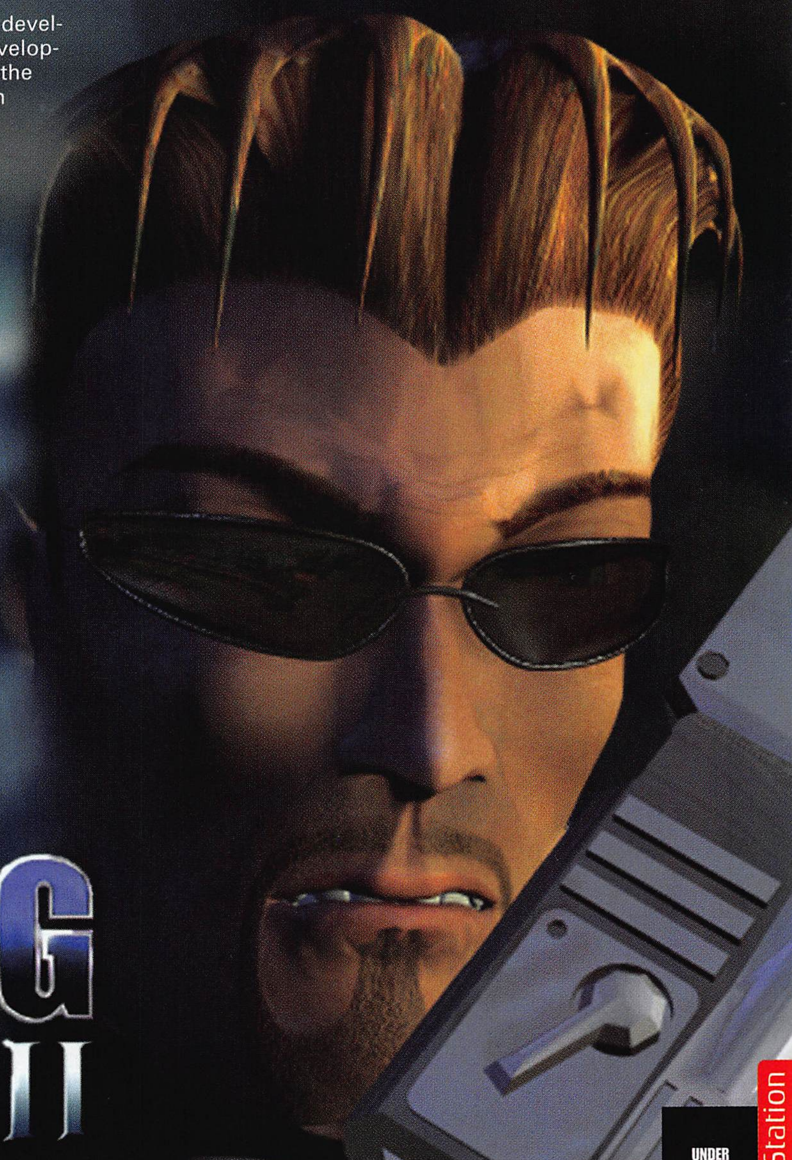


Streets of Rage almost became a reality on the PlayStation and Saturn. Core and Sega were once in talks about taking the *Streets of Rage* license and slapping it onto the *Fighting Force* engine. And we were that close to getting the next *Streets of Rage*. That fell through, and we ended up with a generic 3D action game. It was more or less a given that Core would design a follow up to the game — with or without a *Streets of Rage* license. It took a while, but *Fighting Force 2* is close to being done. In an age when prequels and sequels are developed in tandem, or so it seems anyway, it's nice to see a developer take its time. I don't think *Fighting Force 2* is going to be the sequel you were expecting. No longer is *Fighting Force* an all-out brawlfest. This chapter in the series has gone the way of *Metal Gear* and *Syphon Filter*. There are still the *Final Fight* elements that made the original somewhat fun, but now you can cap an enemy from afar if you don't feel like getting your hands dirty.

Hawk Mason is the only returnee from the original crew (oh how we miss Mace). And now the special ops agent has his hands full, dealing with the remnants of Zeng's syndicate. Nakamichi Corporation plans to make available a super-solider capable of all sorts of destruction. As a CIA-hired gun, it's Hawk's job to find out exactly what is going on.

Luckily, some serious firepower will be available to our merc. The list of weapons includes: assault rifles, grenade launchers, flameguns, rocket launchers, sniper rifles, shotguns, stun batons, and a load of other high-powered weaponry. Too bad for you, the other team has the same firearms.

Our early glimpse of *FF2* gave us the impression that it might give *Syphon Filter* a run for its money. At one point in the game, I had the opportunity to snipe a gorilla-sized enemy from a distance. Missing my headshot (I nailed him in the shoulder), I threw caution to the wind and ran up to finish the goon mano a mano. Dynamic play like this continually holds my interest. Lack of a 2-player mode will undoubtedly miff the *Fighting Force* contingent (all four of them), but hey, it's a different game now... and from what I saw, a better one. Bring it on! **C**



# FIGHTING FORCE II

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| Developer - Core | 1 Player | Cerberus: Cap an enemy from afar if you |
| Publisher - Eidos | Available 4th Qtr. | don't feel like getting your hands dirty... |

P PREVIEW

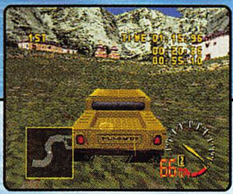
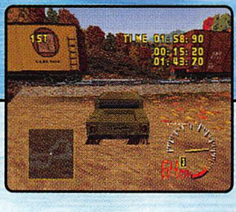
UNDER CONSTRUCTION

PlayStation

# COMING SOON

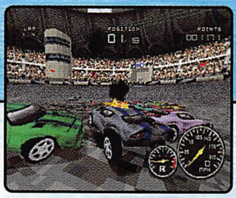
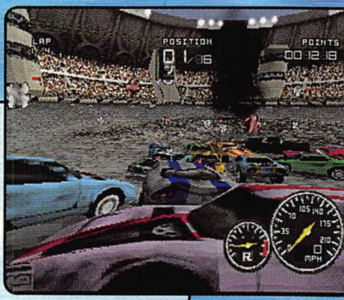
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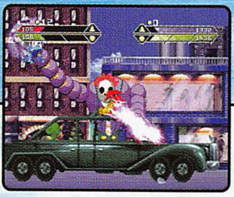




***Test Drive Off-Road 3*** (Accolade) Accolade's rugged racer goes to number three, with more insane tracks from the snowy peaks of the Himalayas to the bayous of New Orleans.



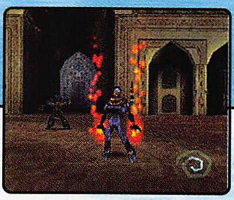
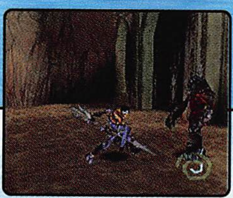
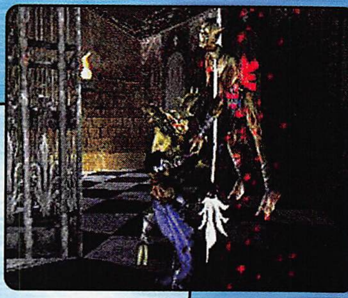
***Demolition Racer*** (Accolade) While *Destruction Derby* might've started it all, *Demolition Racer* looks to outdo the granddaddy of crash course racing with improved graphics and an absurd amount of cars.




***Silhouette Mirage*** (Working Designs) Intense 2D action on the PlayStation lives! And when that 2D-action game is done by Treasure, you can bet money that *Silhouette Mirage* will satisfy all us hungry hardcore gamers.

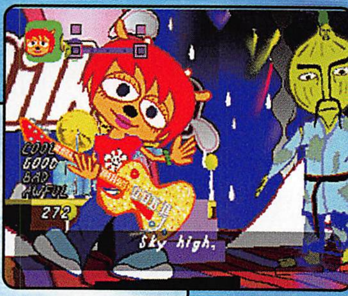


***Legacy of Kain: Soul Reaver*** (Eidos) Well, it's finally here! Vampires, soul sucking, and all that bloody stuff set in some of the most awesome looking environments. Let's just hope the wait was worth it.






***UmJammer Lammy*** (Sony) *Parappa* fans, get ready for some rock n' roll! Take control of Lammy and string your way through each level playing Satriani-like melodies. Remember, it's all in the mind!


THE LEGEND RETURNS IN 3D!
The legendary series that set the standard is back! R-Type Delta returns with more of the frantic finger pounding excitement everyone expects from the R-Type series. Get ready for cool new weapons, more fiendishly clever levels, outrageous enemies, and all new 3D graphics designed exclusively for the PlayStation. This is the game that shooter fans everywhere have been raving about, so get that trigger finger ready and check out R-Type Delta.
• All new 3D graphics for the PlayStation
• Dual Shock Compatible
• 4 ships plus a hidden ship
• 7 levels of frantic trigger finger frenzy
• Top scorers can post and compare scores on the Agetec R-Type Delta Web site
"You simply must buy this game" -Electronic Gaming Monthly
"...possibly the best R-Type yet" -PSM
PlayStation
R·TYPE Δ DELTA
agetec
"Awesome original level design, enemies and bosses" -Official PlayStation Magazine
agetec
ASCII GAME ENTERTAINMENT TECHNOLOGY
Agetec, Inc. 900 Veterans Blvd Suite 600 Redwood City, CA 94063
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PlayStation
irem

# Duke Nukem Zero Hour



Ugh, my head hurts." Those are four words you don't want to come out of a reviewer's mouth after he's played your game. But alas, that's how I feel after squandering many an hour of my life trudging through the debacle that is *Duke Nukem: Zero Hour*.

What gets me is that this game actually showed promise. The graphics were nice and crisp (even though the frame-rate dropped to unhealthy levels in hi-res). The gunfights seemed exciting enough — blasting aliens and pig-cops to giblets, while talkin' smack all the way in classic Duke fashion. Heck, there were even sexy babes to rescue.

All that was missing was a shred of fun. This game sure knows how to make a strong first impression: nice-looking environments, plenty of speech, lots of action early on... But after you play it for an extended sitting, the tedium begins to set in. Monotony takes over, and that gameplay which promised to be like a first person shooter in 3D devolves... <sigh> into switch-flipping, door-finding death. While I wanted to just save babes and perforate aliens, I'm stuck scouring small environments for that next card key... which opens that next door... which leads to the next switch...

Since you're all avid readers of *GameFan*, you must've all heard me cry foul before about the evils of switch-finding gameplay, of which *ZH* is a prime example. It's just disguised well, under the guise of being a *Duke Nukem* game.

As if the tedious gameplay weren't bad enough, the nail in *Zero Hour's* coffin is the control. In the preview of this game, I prayed that GT would take the time to fix the jumping play mechanic, because it was far too loose. Now it's reviewable hour and the platforming is guaranteed to keep the Hair Club for Men in business. For the Eggo-impaired, that last sentence translates to the most frustrating platforming jumps I've seen in a long time. Even fellow ninja gamer ECM, a fully certified platform fanatic, was missing jumps on more than one occasion.

In the end, however, jumping is the least of this game's worries. At first I thought it was mediocre — a good looking game with average gameplay. But after spending over an hour searching for a key (not my idea of a good time), my estimation of *Duke Nukem: Zero Hour* dropped even further.

I recommend staying far, far away from this game. Unless you're some sort of masochistic gamer who enjoys a good switch-flipper (is that an oxymoron?). I just hope that marketing and the N64 appeal don't sell enough copies of *Zero Hour* to warrant a sequel (it happened with *Superman*, it can happen with you!). In the classic words of a babe trapped in a bad game... "Save me! Save me!"

*Recently, Eggo spent an entire weekend tying himself to a lamp-post at Santa Monica and Vine and screaming, "Save me! Save me!"*





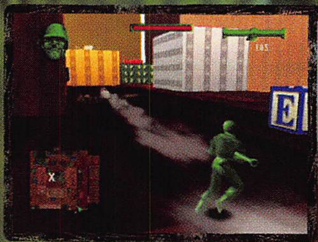


| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| R REVIEW — Eggo: Don't get some. | Developer - Eurocom<br>Publisher - GT Interactive | 1-4 Players<br>Available Now | Viewpoint Score :64 |


(*) Bonus Pack Includes:
• Free Magazine Offer • Collectible 3D Trading Card • Memory Card Stickers
• Special CD Offer* Includes: Music Soundtrack, PC Screensaver Program, Anime Wallpaper, and Selected Voice Files.
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"Thousand Arms fuses hand-drawn sprites, beautiful polygonal landscapes, and interactive anime cut scenes together with stunning results."
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Meis 168 175 47
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•Unique combination of hand-drawn artwork and wonderful 3-D environments!
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# ARMY MEN™
# SARGE'S HEROES™





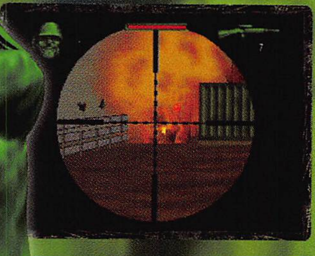
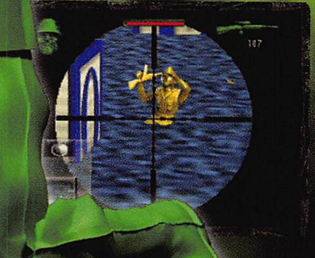

Have you ever imagined being Sergeant Slaughter and whipping out a can of wupass on anything in your way? I'm wondering if anyone remembers Sergeant Slaughter, the WWF Superstar and G.I. Joe personality, but I digress... *Army Men: Sarge's Heroes* has platform elements with a bit of *GoldenEye* and *Command & Conquer* thrown in for good measure. Yes, it's another 3D0 title that hurls you headlong into the world of *Army Men*. This time around, you take command of the Sarge and his buddies in a 3D battlefield, both in single and multi-player modes.

What I like most about *Sarge's Heroes* is the resemblance to older arcade games like *Ikari Warriors* and *Guerilla Wars*. I can still remember stopping by the local 7-11 to pick up a Slurpee and play *Ikari Warriors* or *Guerilla Wars* until I was blue in the face (and my tongue was cherry red). The similarity to these old-school games isn't in the visuals, or the characters, but more in the feel and speed of gameplay. The weapons and level design are also similar to the aforementioned classics.

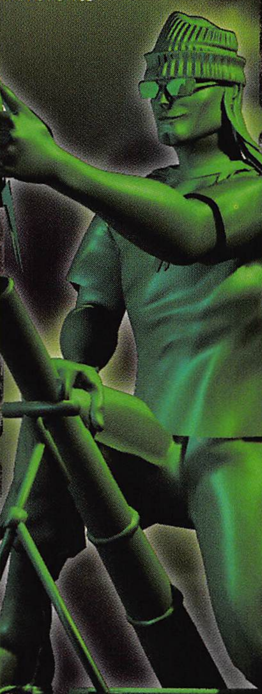
The first mission begins with the evil Tan army attacking the Green army base. As the Sarge, you must locate Colonel Grimm and escort him safely to an escape chopper. All the while, enemies and fellow Army Men battle it out as the Sarge runs from barrack to barrack. You can help out the Greens or go straight for your objective. Seeing your side fight against the bad guys while you're doing your thing makes the game so realistic; it really makes you feel like a part of a unit instead of a lone soldier. Not that there's anything wrong with gunning it solo, *Rambo*-style, but it's refreshing to see a game with pseudo-teams. The Sarge and crew have access to 13 weapons, which make up a beefy arsenal. Among them: machine guns, shotguns, rocket launchers, mines, dynamite, grenade launchers, and more. I love the grenade and rocket launchers; but nothing beats the flamethrower. It's so burningly intense that enemies melt to the core when the heat is turned up — just like being a kid all over again.

*Sarge's Heroes* isn't perfect, our preview version definitely had some control issues. But once again, it's only a previewable copy. Let's hope that the control concerns will be tightened up before its final ship date. If all goes as planned on 3DO's part, *Sarge's Heroes* should shape up to be a decent outing through the world of Army Men. **C**







| | | |
|---|---|---|
| CERBERUS: SURE BEATS PLAYING *SMALL SOLDIERS* | DEVELOPER - THE 3DO COMPANY | 1-4 PLAYERS |
| | PUBLISHER - THE 3DO COMPANY | AVAILABLE FALL |

UNDER CONSTRUCTION
P PREVIEW

## Nintendo must be on a real-time strategy kick!

# COMMAND & CONQUER™



Fans of real-time strategy have all heard of *Command & Conquer* (*C&C* to those in the know). Whether these players like it or not is another story. Westwood developed *C&C* for the PC even before Pentium technology was an accessible reality. *Dune* was Westwood's original real-time strategy title; and from that mold came *Command & Conquer*. I was lucky enough to have been hired as a Product Analyst (read: tester) at Virgin Interactive prior to *C&C*. Besides games like *Kyrandia* and *The 11th Hour*, I also tested *C&C* and its subsequent update packs. Finding bugs was the last thing on the minds of Virgin testers, as we'd play network games into the early hours of the morning. Teams, no teams, NOD, GDI — the rules didn't matter, it was always more fun than should be humanly possible. Suffice it to say, I've logged in more hours on *C&C* than most human beings.

*C&C* has seen many battles on the Saturn and PlayStation. Yet no console versions have captured the game faithfully, with *Red Alert* probably coming the closest. And now, Nintendo must be on a real-time strategy kick because *C&C* and *StarCraft* will be available before Christmas. Unlike prior attempts, *C&C* for the N64 has been completely rebuilt from the ground up. Polygonal surroundings and objects have replaced the 2D backgrounds and rendered sprites of before. It's an odd thing to see a console game look considerably superior to its PC counterpart. *C&C* is playable in two resolutions (medium and high), both of which are very sharp. Even better, the framerate doesn't deteriorate much under regular conditions. Though, later missions with full-scale wars do cause noticeable slow down and will chunk up. Every mission has been ported over, as have the expert-level Special Ops missions. No multi-players maps are offered because there's no multiplayer mode; this is unfortunate considering *C&C* was a great network game. I guess that with no link option or modem available, we'll have to stick to the solo missions. The game is much more difficult without a mouse or keyboard; just try Special Ops and see.

Any way you cut it, this is *C&C* — a great game, however old... at least to me. *C&C* has a good chance of doing well — a solid title, very fun and completely revamped for the N64, which is a definite plus. Got an N64 but no PC or PlayStation, you say? Well, you've got it made here.




*Cerberus has given up his blue-haired ways and donned fatigues, combat boots, and a machete—but he still gets his ass kicked.*









| Viewpoint Score | Developer - Looking Glass | 1 Player | Cerberus: Why isn't it called *Divide & Conquer*? |
|---|---|---|---|
| :88 | Publisher - Nintendo | Available Now | |

R REVIEW

UNDER CONSTRUCTION














# StarCraft

Having 'lusted countless ogres in *WarCraft II* and making a pastime of slaying Lazarus for fun in *Diablo*, I've always looked forward to Blizzard's annual game of the year. *StarCraft* was no different — dining on zerglings for breakfast and marines for dessert, my dropshipped reaver armies were the stuff of legend. Over a year later, Nintendo and Blizzard are porting this former "Game of the Year" to the N64.

Early reports during this game's development said that *StarCraft* **would** have a multi-player aspect, but no details were being released. How could it be done? Without a link cable or a modem, would four-player *StarCraft* battles take place in split-screens so small you'd need a *GameFan* magnifying glass (you know, the one you used to scrutinize the miniscule fonts of old GF layouts) to figure out what's happening?

Well, when Nintendo came by the office with a 70% complete version of *StarCraft*, the veil of secrecy was lifted, and the mystery was solved. Multi-player in *StarCraft* on the N64 is two players only (though you can have two additional computer players)... and it's split-screen. Now I realize there really wasn't any other way for the fun machine to handle this dilemma, but sit back and think about it. A real-time strategy game, in which recon and surveillance are key, that lets you peep at what your opponent is doing? Ludicrous!

Any N64 owner who's played 4-player *GoldenEye* to death in the past two years has evolved that wandering third eye which keeps track of where your opponent is and what he's doing at all times. Now apply that "*GoldenEye*-eye" to *StarCraft* and much of the strategy in this strategy game becomes obsolete; I hope I don't have to draw pictures... Even if you managed to paste cardboard dividers between the split screens on your television and agreed to sit on opposite sides of the room, don't you think that's a lot of work for a single game?

OK, enough with the multi-player rant. The one player mode of *StarCraft* is coming along nicely. Good news for Nintendo-heads is that *StarCraft* will contain the *Brood War* (the PC expansion pack) missions, units, and characters. That's quite a bonus, and it's probably the compression of all that speech into the cart which is taking this game so long to come out. In the 70% preview copy we saw, the sound was mostly unfinished. Also, the speech, which was present in the E3 version, wasn't in this cart, but the *Brood War* addition more than makes up for the aural setback. The controls take some getting used to, but eventually you can adapt.

As a one-player game, *StarCraft* looks respectable, but as a multi-player RTS, that split-screen interface leaves much to be desired. I hope Nintendo has some ace up their sleeve in order to make it more 'fair,' but we'll be back with the reviewable in a few... so stay tuned. E



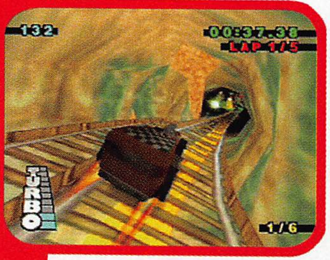


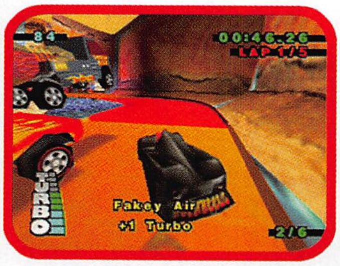
| P PREVIEW | EGGO: WHAT'RE YOU LOOKIN' AT? | DEVELOPER - NINTENDO | 1-2 PLAYERS |
|---|---|---|---|
| | | PUBLISHER - NINTENDO | AVAILABLE SUMMER |



The first blast wiped out your Space Center. In just 3 hours, the high-tech weapons satellite will strike again...It's your job to make sure that it doesn't.
"Explosive N64 adventure" ...Nintendo Power
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Intense 3rd Person Action/Shooter
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# Hot Wheels Turbo Racing










Growing up in the '80s, whenever someone says something like "*Voltron*," a nostalgic wave of memories instantly overwhelms me. <sniff> Well, imagine my surprise when I popped in the faceless N64 cart and saw the Hot Wheels logo come up. It's been ages since I last thought about these popular die-cast collectible cars. Reading the press release, I saw terms like "danger changer" and "loop-the-loops" and all the memories came rushing back. We live in such a different time now... when I say "Matchbox," you're thinking "20"... not toy cars. <sigh>

Getting back to the game (better corral my thoughts before I dive off an '80s nostalgia deep end), *Hot Wheels Turbo Racing* is a racer with a lot going for it: modern music, wacky track design, wild stunts, and the beloved Hot Wheels license. Primus, Mix Master Mike, and the Reverend Horton Heat are just some of the musical artists who've signed up for the N64 version of *Hot Wheels TR*. Yes, you heard that right — music by real artists on the N64!

Err, once again getting back to the game, the track design isn't standard fare for a racing game. Portions of the course include Hot Wheels elements like loop-the-loops and criss-crosses, where cars run the risk of slamming into each other or getting knocked off course. These aren't exactly innovations for a driving game, but the first time you see a plastic loop-the-loop, you'll shed an '80s-lovin' tear.



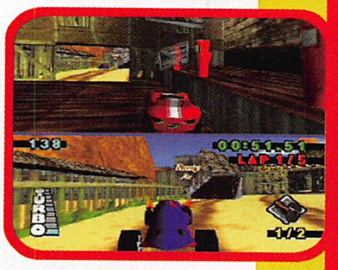




## "...I saw terms like "danger changer" and "loop-the-loops" and all the memories came rushing back."

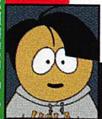
But *HWTR* isn't counting on licensing to be its only selling point; every race is packed with turn-and-burn stunts and high-speed collisions. Whenever you fly off a ramp at high speed, you're given a chance to strut your car-flipping stuff. Stunts like barrel rolls, somersaults, back flips, and 720 spins give you turbos, and the better the stunt, the more turbos you get. Every car has different stunt properties, with varying "flip-ability." Speaking of cars, there are over 40 famous Hot Wheels cars to choose from. There's also all the other good stuff you'd expect in a racing game: boost locations, hidden tracks, short cuts, power-ups, etc.

For Sony fans, there's a PS version of *Hot Wheels* coming as well, and it's lookin' really good. In addition to sharp, clean graphics, the game sports CD-quality songs by the aforementioned artists **and** Metallica (though it's a song from their new album... <sob>). With the strong license, popular musicians, action-packed gameplay, and strong kiddy appeal, *Hot Wheels* should be flyin' off shelves this fall. We'll be back with the final word soon. **E**









| | | |
|---|---|---|
| P PREVIEW — EGGO: GET 'EM WHILE THEY'RE, UM, HOT... | DEVELOPER - STORMFRONT | 1-2 PLAYERS |
| | PUBLISHER - ELECTRONIC ARTS | AVAILABLE FALL |

# BattleTanx™ II Global Assault™







## I love blasting an unknowing victim with a nuke... it's so gratifying!

Tanks are cool. No buts about it. Weighing in at over 50 tons, these bad boys can deal some serious damage. Now, manning a tank isn't anything new; some of the earliest games featured tanks — *Combat* and *BattleZone*. During the '80s we played Atari's *Vindicators* and SNK's *Iron Tank*, while the 16-bit era saw *M-1 Abram's Battle Tank*. As the first game of its kind on N64, 3DO's *BattleTanx* had some good ideas, but fell short in execution. It wasn't as fun as it could have been, particularly when compared to Namco's ultra-popular *Tokyo Wars*. I didn't feel compelled to continue playing; be it single or multi-player mode. I mean, when you're behind the wheel of a moving fortress, you want to feel power. There was no sense of power in *BattleTanx*, at least for me.

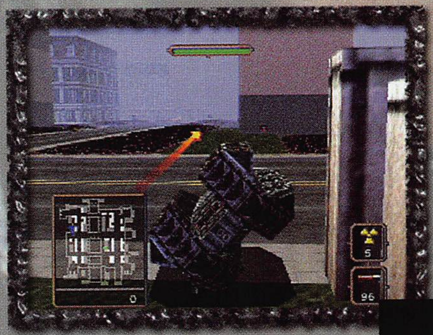
So, why do a sequel of a mediocre title? Well, there's only room for improvement... and what an improvement! Eye candy isn't what makes a game, but it sure does help. Texture depth is high, giving tanks and world objects a clean look. Another bonus is the increased speed of gameplay and smoother frame rate — even in four-player mode. Studio 3DO also added some more modes and a load of new tanks. My personal fave is the Flip-E Tank. This futuristic-looking behemoth can roll on its side strafe-style, to avoid oncoming projectiles or opposing tanks. Other newbie tanks include a Hovertank and the heavily armored Rhino tank.

Gameplay remains faithful to the original, with improvements in all the right places. There's more gameplay balance. Stuff like the guided missiles are easier to control and not as much of a "thug tactics" weapon. More diversified weapons and power-up items help out in the balance department. I love blasting an unknowing victim with a nuke — it's so gratifying! That's power.

*BattleTanx II* is quite a departure from its predecessor. Polished to a degree that the original could only dream of, *BattleTanx II* is that much easier to pick up and play. Twenty levels, 17 missions, 10 tank types, and seven game modes will promise to keep you busy for more than a couple of days. Get ready to have some friends over to blow things up co-op or deathmatch style. Remember — use the nuke as much as you can; you can thank me later. **C**





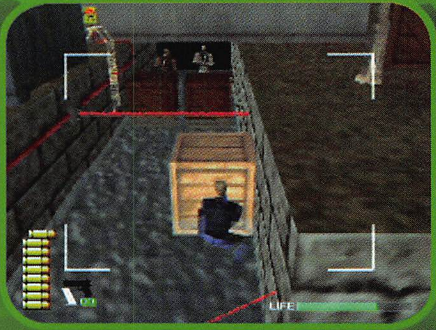


| | | |
|---|---|---|
| Developer - Studio 3DO | 1-4 Players | Cerberus: *Tokyo Wars* |
| Publisher - The 3DO Company | Available Winter | for the Nintendo 64? |

P Preview

Under Construction





Call me crazy, but I like the whole concept of being a super spy or member of a covert team. The PlayStation has its share of games of this kind, but the Nintendo 64 has been sorely lacking espionage games. Sure, there's been *Mission: Impossible* and *GoldenEye*, but two games aren't enough.

Enter *Winback* by KOEI. Covert Operations is more like an episode of *Mission: Impossible* than *Mission: Impossible* for the N64 was. Out of nowhere, a company known for its simulation RPGs has somehow managed to develop what could be a hit.

A group of terrorists (they're everywhere these days) has taken control of the gulf satellite, and they've already destroyed a space station. The government is pretty pissed about it all, I know I would be. As is standard practice, a team of soldiers has been dispatched to clean things up. And as is common practice, things go horribly wrong. You take control of Jean-Luc, and it's your job to locate your team (most of whom are MIA) and stop the terrorists.

I loved *GoldenEye*, *Metal Gear Solid*, and *Syphon Filter* to a lesser degree. *WinBack* takes the best of all three games and meshes it all together. First, *WinBack* is one of the best-looking N64 games I've seen. The first mission's sky effects are very convincing. Sounds are just as exceptional, which is not too common on N64. You won't be disappointed with gameplay either. Jean-Luc controls quite well and handles firearms like a trained sniper.





# WinBack
## Covert Operations









## WinBack is one testoterone-filled ride through the eyes of a spy.

From the outset, he must escape from an enemy base. He has to find his way around and at the same time contend with a group of foot soldiers guarding the perimeter. The tension caused by the auto-camera angles and music nears that of a suspense movie. Sneaking from corner to corner will be necessary to make it out alive.

Any incomplete game isn't without flaws; *WinBack* desperately needs side-step buttons. Also, the view of Jean-Luc is obstructed by bad camera angles here and there. And enemies can't be shot as quickly as I'd like, heh heh. Games early on in development, like *WinBack*, always get better, and I know *WinBack* will rock when it's available in the U.S. C

UNDER CONSTRUCTION

P PREVIEW

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| CERBERUS: SOLID SNAKE | DEVELOPER - OMEGA FORCE | 1-4 PLAYERS |
| MOONLIGHTS ON THE N64. | PUBLISHER - KOEI | AVAILABLE 4TH QTR. |







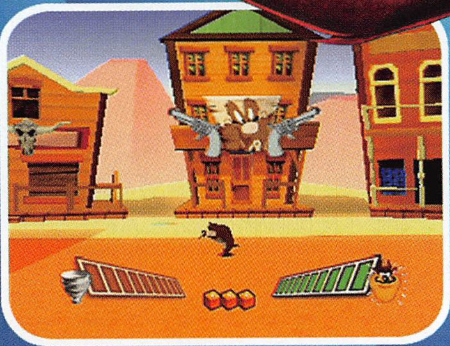


What's an out-of-work cartoon star to do? Lounge around on the couch all day, reliving his glory days on TV while eating and developing a gut? Well, not if your girlfriend is She Devil. Not wanting to see Taz grow love handles <shiver>, She Devil gets him a job as a delivery bo... err, devil. And just when you thought your delivery days were over... here come *Paperboy* and *Taz Express* for the N64, proving that courier games will never be in crisis in today's gaming world.

There's no other Warner Bros. character more suited to shuttling packages from point A to point B than Taz. If anyone can get the job done in the fastest time (assuming he doesn't eat the package), it's Taz. Everyone's favorite whirling dervish uses the patented Tazmanian twist to blaze new trails through hills, walls, concrete... you name it, he smashes it. Of course, you'll have to take care of the Acme package you're carrying, because it wouldn't do to have Wile E. Coyote's bat wings arrive in a mangled state. Speaking of ol' Wile E., he's scheduled to make an appearance in this game, along with other Looney Tunes stars Marvin the Martian and Yosemite Sam. Thankfully, since Taz doesn't speak (more like an occasional grunt or two), precious cart space can be used for the voices of these other characters, to really get you in the WB mood.

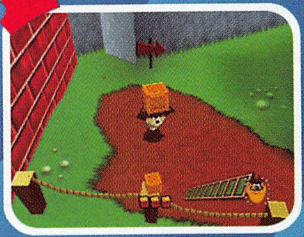
For a delivery game, *Taz Express* is surprisingly a 3D adventure rather than a bike ride of a game. In addition to the traditional Tazmanian spin move, he can run, jump, and eat almost anything that crosses his path (just don't be surprised if he spits out the object in disgust). Gameplay-wise, and I'm oversimplifying here, imagine Lara Croft

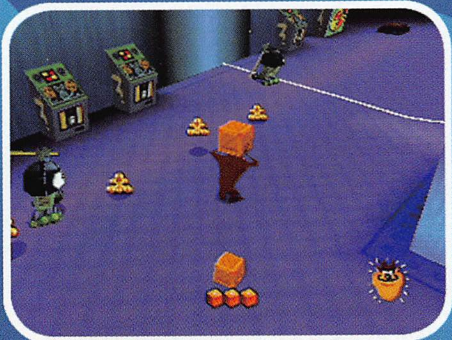










carrying a box everywhere she goes. Of course *Taz Express* is a lot sillier than *Tomb Raider*, and the puzzles aren't deep mindbenders, but don't expect this to be a walk in the park. Parts of the game already look pretty challenging, considering this game is probably intended for a younger audience. Expect platforming elements and true tests of your dexterity.

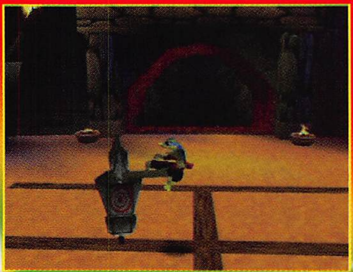
Although *Taz Express* is still early in development, much of the level design and problem-solving are already in place and look promising so far. The way this title's shaping up, Infogrames is quickly fleshing out a respectable library of Warner Bros. titles (*Duck Dodgers* is coming soon as well) that more than live up to the name. E

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| Developer - Zed Two, UK | 1 Player | Eggo: I'm down |
| Publisher - Infogrames | Available November | with the devil! |

P PREVIEW








Gex, the closest thing 3DO ever got to having a mascot didn't let a sinking ship bring him down. The little lizard made the painless leap from the dying 3DO to — not one — but two very successful consoles; I could mention the Saturn, but I said successful consoles. Anyway, Crystal Dynamics has its golden goose, or so it seems, and *Gex 3: Deep Cover Gecko* is the newest chapter in the *Gex* library of games.

It's not often that I get queasy playing a video game. The last time it happened was during a marathon session of *GoldenEye* — and I'm not the only person who got tunnel vision from that game [Eggo's note: Amen, brother!]. After playing *Gex 3* for an hour, I had to stop and get a breath of fresh valley air (fer sure, dude!). *GoldenEye* causes dizziness because of motion; and *Gex 3* got me nauseous because of the camera programmed by Satan himself. Not that *G3* looks bad — it's nice and bright with colorful lighting and the usual bells and whistles; however, Crystal Dynamics has to do something about its

# GEX 3
## DEEP COVER GECKO

busted camera. One second it'll be behind Gex and the next it'll be to his left or extreme right. Not good is all I need to say.

Once my head stopped spinning, I braved the game once more. *Gex 3* has not an original idea anywhere to be found. Take every single super popular platform adventure game within the last four years, put 'em in a blender and guess what you get? Yes, *Gex 3*; Shigeru Miyamoto, Chris and Tim Stamper, Yuji Naka, and Jason

### Does anyone really want to play the same level a billion times over?

Ruben should get some kind of royalty fee for this blatant rip-off of each of their particular games. With that said, I've decided that platformers have way too much going on these days. It all started with *Banjo-Crapzooie*, erm, I mean *Kazooie*. Does anyone really want to play the same level a billion times over? Why can't they all be as amazing as *Super Mario 64*? So simple yet so complex.

I can't bring myself to say *Gex 3* is a bad game, just tired and very recycled. Never played a *Gex* game or a platformer for that matter? Then, hell, try this game, you'll love it. It's has a ton of stuff for you to like: voices, large worlds, good control, you name it. As for the rest of the civilized world, there's more to come and better at that.

*Cerberus can often be found near local arcades, wandering in circles, holding his head and muttering something about "camera angles."*









| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| EGGO: IF YOU PULL A LIZARD'S HEAD OFF, DOES IT GROW BACK? | DEVELOPER - CRYSTAL DYNAMICS | 1 PLAYER | VIEWPOINT SCORE: 68 |
| | PUBLISHER - CRAVE | AVAILABLE NOW | |

# COMING SOON

COMING SOON COMING SOON COMING SOON COMING SOON COMING SOON COMING SOON COMING SOON

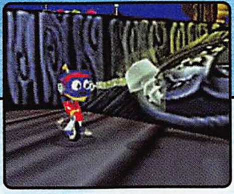


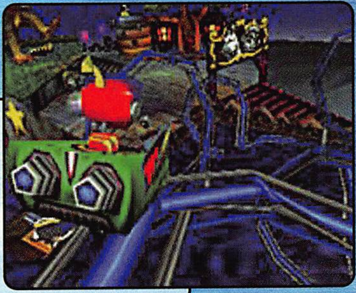




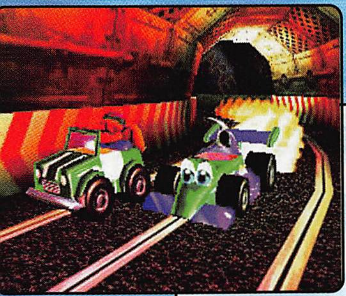
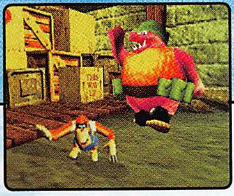
***Nuclear Strike*** (THQ) An old-favorite from the glorious 16-bit days returns on the N64. Control various vehicles as you thwart evil nations from starting a nuclear war.

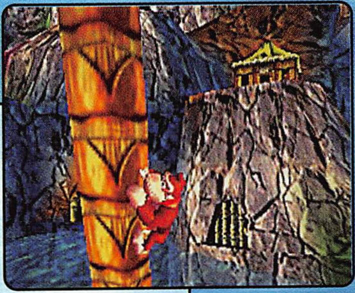




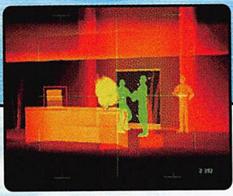


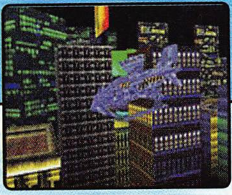
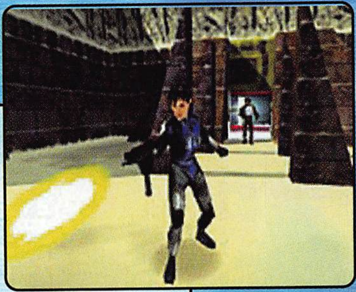
***Sprocket*** (Ubi Soft) A funky looking puzzler from the makers of *Rayman*, in which you control a robot without any arms and use his tractor beam to solve various puzzles.

***Donkey Kong 64*** (Rare) The crazy monkey of Nintendo comes with an all-new adventure complete with various mini-games and classic platform gameplay. Definitely one of the most anticipated titles for the N64.

***Perfect Dark*** (Rare) Goldeneye's reign as the best first person shooter on the N64 might be coming to an end with *Perfect Dark*'s excellent mixture of first person shooting action with *Blade Runner*-like adventure.







***Ogre Battle 64*** (Nintendo) One of the longest RPG's on the SNES gets its turn on the N64: excellent graphics, classic gameplay, and a story to rival even the mighty *FF Tactics*. Stay tuned for more next issue.

# Carrier





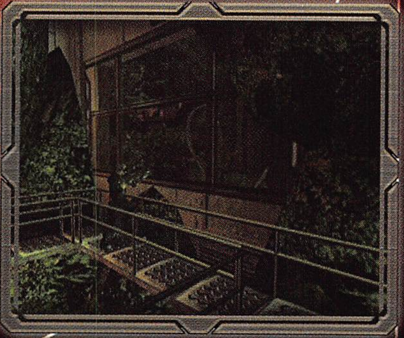





You know the drill: Make something good and people will notice. But make something really good, and people will follow your lead. If only Capcom could have patented the survival horror genre, the company would have a lot more money in its piggy. Sharing a premise comparable to that of *Deep Fear* for the Saturn, *Carrier* is now nearing completion. Jaleco hopes to wrap up production for U.S. release on this bad boy before the end of September.

*Carrier* is a closer relative to *Resident Evil* than *Blue Stinger*. While *BS* throws in the occasional slapstick, *Carrier* remains ice cold throughout. A carrier just off the coast is headed straight for the mainland. A deadly virus has turned the crew into human/plant hybrid mutants. With the aid of your team, you must somehow stop the vessel from completing the voyage home. If you don't, all hell will break loose — sounds like something Shinji Mikami would think up, doesn't it? Sight to sound, *Carrier* screams *Resident Evil*. Even the *RE* control scheme is utilized in *Carrier*. Pressing Left or Right on the analog thumb stick or D-pad causes the lead character to rotate left and right, respectively. Up and Down controls forward and backward movement. No run button is necessary when using the analog thumb stick, but one can be assigned when using the D-pad. Shooting is accomplished by pressing the right trigger button to get your weapon at the ready, then pressing the A button to fire away. It's no surprise that almost any weapon can be aimed up or down to get your target just right. Weapons in *Carrier* are more testosterone-driven than the ones stocked in Raccoon City; and carnivorous plant people hate rapid firing M-16s, or a Magnum, or a Laser Rifle, or a... well, you get the picture. From what I played, *Carrier* is more action-driven with less obnoxious puzzles; I hate puzzles. More action is welcome, as is the blazing speed.



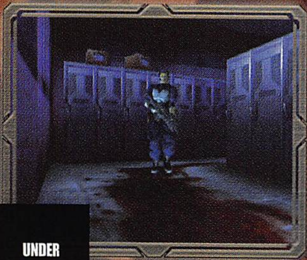




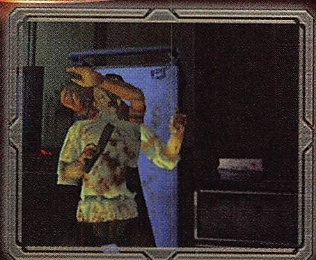
*Codename: Veronica* will set the mark for real-time environments, but *Carrier* holds its own. Exterior portions of the carrier have a cool haze caused by the rains. Other areas that have been infected with plant life look like they belong in a green room. The usual effects like fog, smoke, and lighting are all done well. Whoever coded the cameras for *Carrier* does a convincing job of replicating the *RE* style. I can't say they're all perfect but the camera angles are in the right places.

Jaleco still has some touches to add to this one, so let's see how it shapes up. It's far from being a bad game at this point. *Blue Stinger* and *Carrier* will be a good combo before the main course. **C**







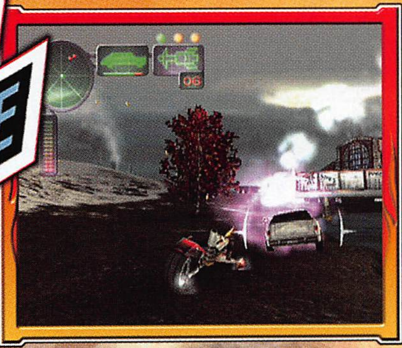


UNDER CONSTRUCTION

| P PREVIEW | CERBERUS: LOOK, MA, IT'S DEEP FEAR II! | DEVELOPER - JALECO | 1 PLAYER |
|---|---|---|---|
| | | PUBLISHER - JALECO | AVAILABLE 4TH QTR. |





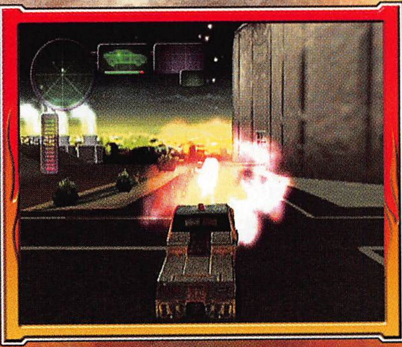



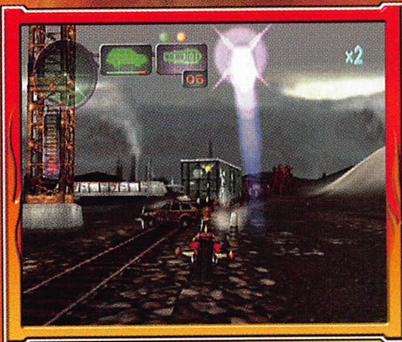
The first time I saw the original *Vigilante 8* running on a PlayStation in the office, I was dumbfounded. The only things comparable in terms of pure jaw-dropping power on the PlayStation were *Toshinden* and *Gran Turismo.* What amazing graphics! Look at those textures! Those crazy lighting effects! That gratuitous lens flare! OK, maybe we could do without the lens flare, but I figured it'd be a while before another game came along that wowed me as much as *V8* did. Now if you bet me that the sequel to *Vigilante 8* would be as much a visual leap over the first as the original game was to *Twisted Metal 2*, I would've taken that bet... and lost. Of course this is the Dreamcast version of *Vigilante 8: 2nd Offense* we're talking about here, and there is a 96-bit disparity between hardware, but don't let those technicalities destroy my argument (I spent a long time coming up with the idea for this first paragraph, and I really don't want to rewrite it). This game is easily as impressive as its forefather back in the day, and the scary thing is *Vigilante 8: 2nd Offense* isn't close to being done yet.

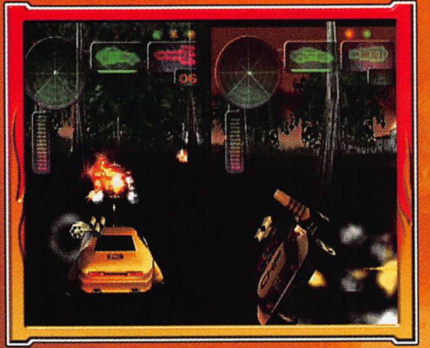
Still early in development, *V8:2O* is making converts already. You have to see this thing move at its sweet 60 fps to understand how exceptionally purty it looks right now. Lighting and smoke effects are much improved, and all the textures have that shockingly-clean, 128-bit gloss. Even when viewing the game with normal A/V inputs (instead of S-video or the VGA box), the game looks too good for the television that houses it.

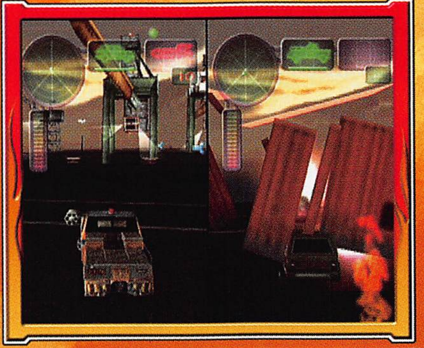
By the time it's complete, Activision is planning for 12 interactive environments and 18 vehicles to vent your road rage with. The rev we have is so early that many levels don't have power-ups or environment effects in place yet. The physics, collision detection, and Z-buffering also need some work, but it certainly gives us a taste of what to look forward to later this year. Also noteworthy, just like the Nintendo 64 version of *V8*, *Vigilante 8: 2nd Offense* will have a ripping 4-player mode for bragging rights among your friends. Our preview copy only has two-player split-screen, but expect to go mano a mano... a mano a mano (?) when all's said and done.

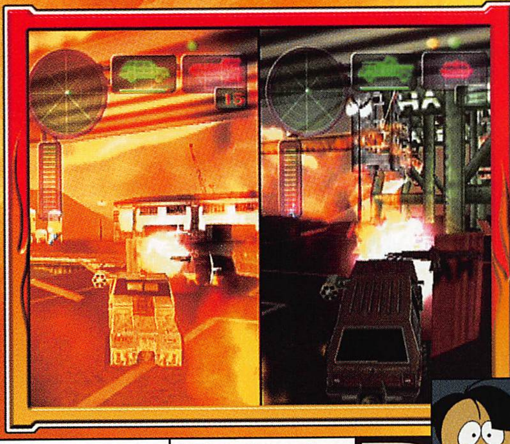
Just think about this, one of *Vigilante 8*'s environments was a ski resort which had an avalanche take place if certain events were triggered. After seeing the avalanche/snowboarding scene in *Sonic Adventure*, I can't wait to see Luxoflux's take on the ski resort in *Vigilante 8: 2nd Offense*. Unfortunately, reviewables won't be popping up for another few months. So feast on these screens and stay raptly attuned to any further rumblings about this title. This isn't the last you'll hear of *2nd Offense*. E







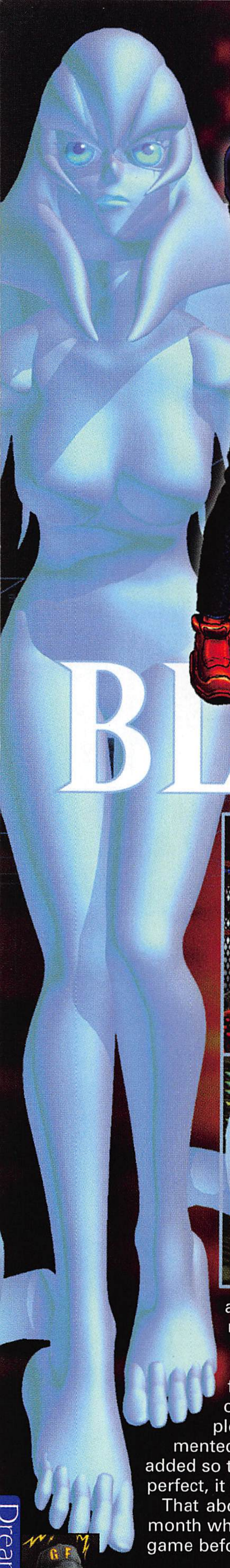




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| DEVELOPER - LUXOFLUX | 1-4 PLAYERS | EGGO: V8 AIN'T |
| PUBLISHER - ACTIVISION | AVAILABLE NOVEMBER | ENOUGH. (GROAN) |

P PREVIEW

Dreamcast





Survival Horror. A genre that's big, and getting bigger by the minute (something equivalent in scope to my consternation with *Superman 64's* sales...<shudder>) with new additions every couple of months to stoke the fire that Capcom kindled into a raging inferno. First there was *Resident Evil*, which fathered *Resident Evil 2*, the upcoming *Resident Evil 3: Nemesis* and *Dino Crisis*. Before long, other companies got in on the act — far be it for this biz to ignore (and summarily beat to death) a hot concept — Konami, Jaleco, and even spin-off developer Climax Graphics soon threw their own logs on the fire. In fact, it's to the point where every console **needs** its own entry in the SH sweepstakes just to feel proud and be able to hold its head high when it goes down to the console watering hole after a hard day of entertaining 'little Jimmy.' Enter CG's *Blue Stinger*, the first SH-esque title on Dreamcast (soon to be joined by *Carrier* and the originator, *Resident Evil*).

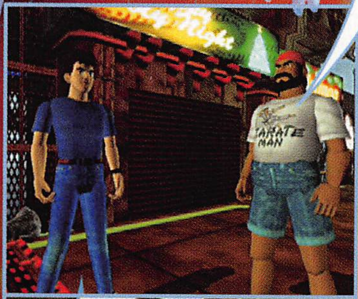






When *Blue Stinger* arrived in its import form, I took a decidedly negative attitude towards it. After all, *Resident Evil* was a one-of-a-kind experience, and every feeble attempt at the genre since then has only weakened my resolve to play through any more for fear of drowning in a sea of utter mediocrity (*Silent Hill*? A second-rate clone, and a pale shadow of the innovator— and that's being kind). However, during

# BLUE STINGER





the recent summer game slowdown (that sad time of year when all the 'new' games are ones you didn't bother playing through back in the 4th quarter of the previous year), when new DC releases were about as frequent as Dangohead and dates (we call 'em victims around here), I popped open *Blue Stinger*, and much to my surprise it was pretty damned good. The story was a bit snapped (the English translation of the voices coupled with Japanese subtitles made for some interesting scenes... including the infamous bathhouse sequence, <yipe>!), but the game was remarkably fun, with a more solid emphasis on the action side of things than the original *RE*.

If there was one thing about *Blue Stinger* that drove many to the brink of controller-snapping rage, it was what generous people might term 'camera angles' — and I mean generous in a "no really, Keanu Reeves is a great actor" sort of way. Now I've been listening to people go on and on about how *Sonic's* camera angles aren't ideal at all times, but even the worst view in *Sonic* pales in comparison to how horrific *BS*' cameras were. You'd think it would have made sense that in a real-time 3D world, there would always be a handy 'over the shoulder' cam — but not in *Blue Stinger*, no sir! They've gotta go the ultra-cinematic route, no matter how unplayable it renders the game. It might have done the programmers and/or designers a lot of good if they'd simply studied something called movies and figured out that certain angles just don't work — MTV and Marvel Comics are **not** the place to go shopping for all your camera angle needs.

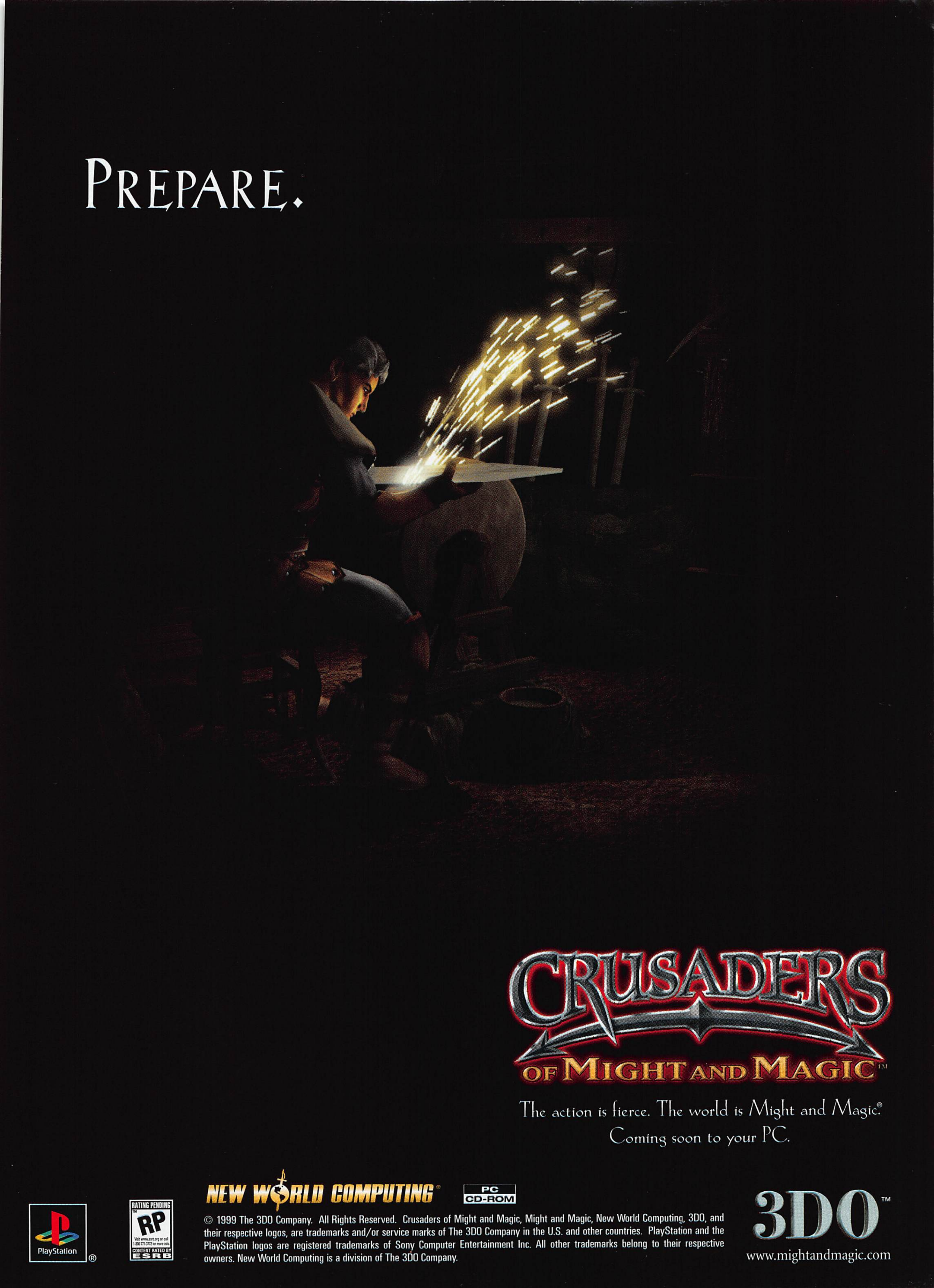




Ah, but when Activision announced plans to port it to the States, thankfully they thought twice about leaving the game untouched and foisting it on unwary domestic buyers. The camera system has undergone a complete revision, and thankfully you can opt out of the 'cameras' that CG implemented in the import release. Primarily, an over-the-shoulder cam has been added so that now most fits of rage can be avoided (I need my meds). While it isn't perfect, it certainly marks a huge step forward for the game itself.

That about wraps it for this super-quick preview. I'll dive into more depth next month when the final copy blows into the office. Till then, know that if you see this game before then, you can mark it as 'must-rent,' with an option to buy. **ECM**

| PREVIEW | ECM: I can see... as if for the first time! | Developer - Climax Graphics<br>Publisher - Activision | 1 Player<br>Available Sept. 9th |
|---|---|---|---|


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**(Note: This preview is based on the Japanese final of the game.)**

Many months back, I reviewed *Street Fighter Alpha 3* for the PlayStation, and I thought it couldn't get any better than this. Well, it took only three months and Sega's little white box to prove me wrong. The Dreamcast version of *Alpha 3* is here, and I think we're going to have to spawn a new GF term: "better than arcade perfect." We've seen console games that have more features than their arcade counterparts in the *Tekkens* and *Mortal Kombats*, but now it's becoming a regular (if somewhat disturbing) trend for DC titles to be better at home than in the arcade (Namco's *Soul Calibur* being yet another example). At last, here's a *Street Fighter* that's not only arcade perfect **but** which also has more gameplay features than the arcade.

How exactly do you top an arcade game of *SFA3* caliber? Simple: Add gameplay modes like World Tour and Dramatic Battle. If you missed the PlayStation review of this game, World Tour is a new addition to the *SF* universe which lets you tour the world like Ryu, duffel bag in hand, constantly seeking a new challenge and living for the fight. Visiting foreign countries, you'll drop in on ol' buddies like Blanka (or should I say Jimmy?) in Brazil, Fei Long in Hong Kong, and... what the heck, see how Sagat's doin' in Thailand (still got those chest pains, big guy?). As you fight, you'll gain experience, as well as character power-ups which you can customize before battle. These power-ups give you the ability to super cancel, chain combo, fill your





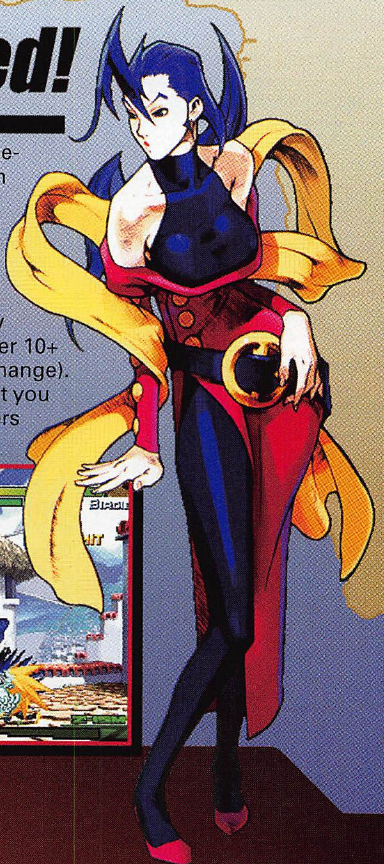


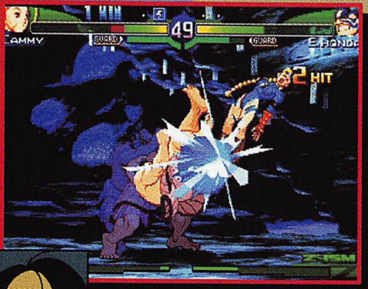
# A blazing 2D Capcom fighter at home with no loading or RAM cart required!




super bar without doing anything, and more. The RPG elements plus the ability to use your customized character in Versus mode make World Tour Mode worth playing.

But what really gets my juices flowin' in DC A3 is the Dramatic Battle. We first saw this mode in *Street Fighter Alpha* on the PlayStation, in which you and a buddy played as Ryu and Ken against a CPU-controlled M. Bison. Sandwiching the head of Shadowloo between a flurry of low shorts, spin kicks, and fireballs was exciting, fun, and novel (after 10+ renditions of *Street Fighter*, innovative ideas are a welcome change). Even the PlayStation version of *Alpha 3* had Dramatic Battle, but you were restricted to mirror matches, so two of the three characters would be the same (e.g., Ryu and Charlie vs. Ryu).

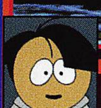










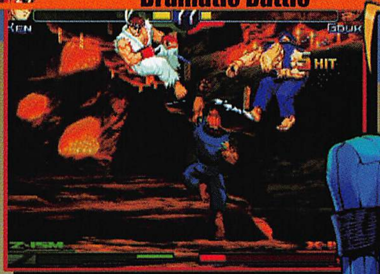



| P PREVIEW | EGGO: Now we're talkin'! Finally, some DC 2D that I like! | Developer - Capcom / Publisher - Capcom | 1-3 Players / Available Fall |
|---|---|---|---|






Dramatic Battle

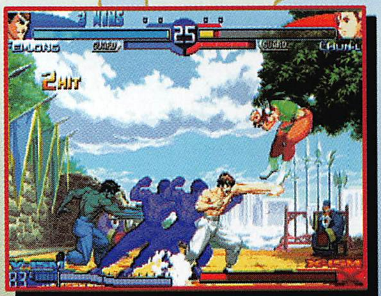




Well, the Dreamcast version is the next step in the evolution of Dramatic Battle. With no restrictions on backgrounds, character selection, or strenuous loading time, the DC *A3* lets you and two other friends go at it simultaneously. A ménage à trois *Street Fighter*-style! Imagine it — you're so cocky that you challenge two buds to take you on at the same time. It's tough defeating two human opponents with separate life bars, but if you do, you'll be the undisputed *SF* champion and can tell the tale till the day you die. For those who haven't played Dramatic Battle, you must try it. It'll probably be the best time you've ever had playing a *Street Fighter*, and trust me, being there since day 1 of *SFII*, I've played a lot of *Street Fighter*. Seeing the DC version of *Alpha 3*'s Dramatic Battle and watching the DC manage four characters onscreen simultaneously with *Marvel vs. Capcom*, the next logical step is a *Street Fighter* game which lets four players go at it, all at once, for the full duration of the round without tagging in and out. Throw in modem compatibility and I'll be in *Street Fighter* heaven... Capcom, are you listening?!

2D lovers, *Street Fighter Alpha 3* is yet another chance for the DC to flex its 2D muscle. Porting every sweet frame of animation perfectly, without any slowdown or loss of frames, the DC version of *Alpha 3* is arcade perfect... ahh, I like the way that term rolls off the tongue. Best of all, there's no loading time (one of the few gripes I had with the PlayStation version) to worry about, so it truly is perfect. With notches in its belt like *Marvel vs. Capcom* and *Street Fighter Alpha 3*, the only thing Capcom has left to prove is whether Sega's dream machine can duplicate the CPS III wonder *Street Fighter III: Third Strike*. Judging from the impressive efforts thus far, I won't be surprised if the DC can bring the *SFIII* experience home.

As yet, there's no word from Capcom whether they will make any changes to the U.S. version. But as it stands, they need only change a few names and translate the trash-talking text between rounds, and they'll have one of the best Dreamcast titles this year. **E**

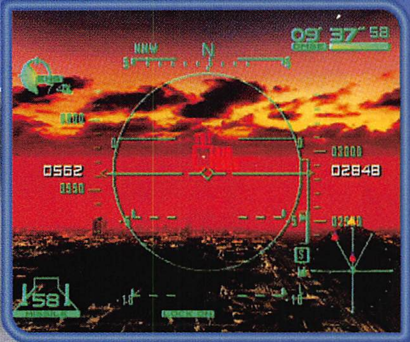


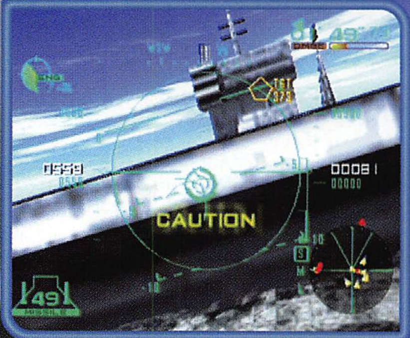


# Street Fighter Alpha 3®








This is Konami's *other* Dreamcast title. While the other is a mythic adventure through the realms of the undead, this title is a fly-by-the-seat-of-your-pants combat flight simulation; *Airforce Delta* will attempt to take you on the highway to the danger zone (how could I *not* put in a Kenny Loggins lyric?).

Closer to *Afterburner* than a traditional flight sim, *AD* will try and cater to the larger audience which would normally be turned off by the overly technical and dry flight sim. As we all know, from our television car commercials, "wider is better" and that is exactly the audience Konami hopes to snag with this game. Thank heavens, because I can think of nothing more mind-numbingly tedious than having to sit through another hard-core sim.

First impressions? Well, for one, the backgrounds are stunning. If there has ever been a more beautiful sunset in a game, I haven't seen it. The perfect backdrop to a high-speed dogfight — "Isn't it lovely how the sun's rays reflect off that exploding fuselage, honey?" The frame-rate is, of course, hovering around 60 fps, and the level of detail on the enemy aircraft and naval vessels is something to behold (that is, before you demolish them with a couple of stinger missiles).

# AIRFORCE DELTA




The control seems pretty good, although it's obvious that actually *finding* targets will be a bit of a process. There is a lot of space up there and only a few planes to shoot at. Some of the dogfights seem more like a game of peekaboo than anything else.

The levels are all sortie-based, with the standard control room briefing and schematic run-down before you hit the skies. Money, earned from kills, allows you to purchase a wider variety of planes. You have your own hangar, so before each mission you can cruise in and choose which plane will be best suited for the task at hand. Be careful while flying, though, because crashing a plane means it is forever gone, and that is some expensive equipment, gentlemen...

*Airforce Delta* may end up being the Dreamcast's version of *Ace Combat*. While it may be questionable whether the power of the machine is being fully utilized or not, it's a pretty safe bet this game will find a core audience. **EN**












| P PREVIEW | EL NIÑO: OFF WE GO, INTO THE WILD BLUE YONDER... | DEVELOPER - KONAMI | 1 PLAYER |
|---|---|---|---|
| | | PUBLISHER - KONAMI | AVAILABLE FALL |

Maybe in Japan it's ok to release a game that promotes rogue highway racing, but here in the States, where kids are infinitely dumber (hey guys, wanna lay down on the median strip like in *The Program*?), the fewer ideas you put in their heads, the better. The idea of little Timmy, with his driver's permit, hauling down the asphalt in Backwoods, U.S.A, high-beaming drivers is, well... just too hilarious!

The premise of the game is simple: Cruise the highways of Tokyo, searching for other hot-rodders to challenge to races. When you see one of your road rivals, flash your high beams and prepare to drag! There's money at stake, so you'd better bring your A-game.

Playing Dreamcast games still awes me. The graphics are so overwhelming that you almost forget to notice the gameplay... almost. It still takes good gameplay to sell games, and *Extreme Racer* seems to have all the right parts in all the right places. Not only does it feature some beautiful graphics (hey isn't that the PSY demo running...?) but the control, concept, and extra features make it an excellent game.

At first you will take issue with the control. The cars tend to float and the analog control seems sluggish. My initial thoughts were frustration and the desire to write this off as a sub-par game. However, both ECM and Fury told me to stick with it. They too had issues early on, but quickly flip-flopped. No need to even cite it as a preview problem because, after a few races, you'll have grown accustomed to the control and be kickin' butt.

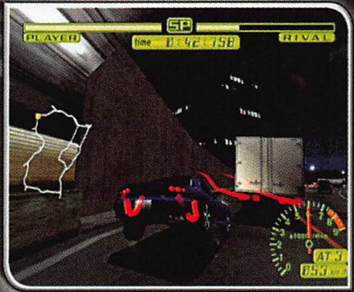


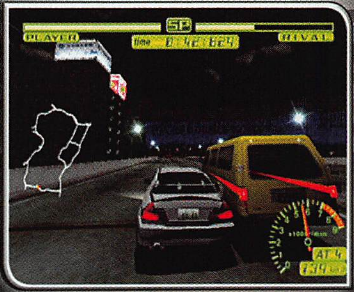

Like other titles of its ilk, *Extreme Racer* allows you to upgrade your cars as well as purchase more formidable racing machines. The money you earn beating other drivers will quickly fill your coffers, so it's wise to soup up that mean machine of yours as much as possible. All of the cars are licensed and the streets you'll be tearing up are actual Tokyo freeways.

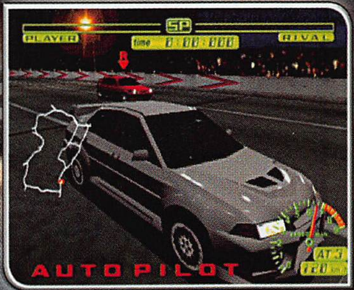
The ability to customize the color of your car, license plate, and driver name are also welcome additions. The personal touch is always nice...

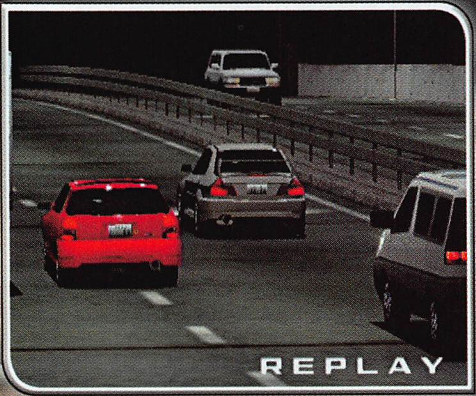
The music is still not in, but that was fine by me; personally I prefer to race to my own tunes — Van Halen in particular (you just can't top *Hot For Teacher* at 150 mph). The sound effects, though... dig those real engine sounds! This isn't exactly a high point because there just isn't much, past the car engine, that excites the ears. There aren't even any cool metal-grinding sounds when you hit the guard rails (I seem to do that a lot). There's still time, so maybe a couple more additions will be made.

Another Dreamcast game that appears to be a winner. This will be a mighty good Christmas for The Niño. **EN**







# Tokyo Extreme Racer

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| Developer - Genki | 1-2 Players | El Niño: That guy's flashing his high beams at us... think he's a gangster? |
| Publisher - Crave | Available Sept. 9th | |

Preview

# Trickstyle

I hate PC-to-console ports — any hard-core console gamer worth his salt should feel the same way. Oh, on rare occasions we get something worth playing (the recent port of *Quake 2*, for instance), but in the main we're more likely to be the lucky recipient of the latest fare playing at the local shovelware theater. 'Games' like DC *Incoming* and *Expendable*, which left development on the PC side of the universe and were obviously manhandled over to console during Ted the janitor's spare time. Generally it doesn't matter as much in the Land of the Rising Sun, as you're about as likely to find someone playing PC games there as we are to find someone playing a 'dating sim' (earth to social life...come in, social life). However, *if* a console game is being developed *alongside* its PC counterpart, you can bet that it has a better than 50% chance of being something stunning, as the console side tends to infect the pace and style of development rather than vice versa. Case in point: Acclaim/Criterion Studios incredible DC launch title, *Trickstyle* (a.k.a. *Velocity*).







Up until E3, I was just a bit leary of what Criterion was putting together after taking their initial Dreamcast title, *Redline Racer*, for a spin (published in Japan by the PC-to-DC port king, Imagineer). Sure, the screenshots that poured in on a semi-weekly basis certainly made for some great-looking fare, but the cardinal rule of PC-to-DC port is: looks great, plays like a second cousin to *Time Killers* (OK, so that's a little harsh...but *just* a little). Thankfully (and you don't know just how thankful I am) this game plays like butter even in the previewable state.

While *Trickstyle* looked more like a racing game in the early stages of development, it seems as if the game migrated a little bit more in the direction of something like *Cool Boarders*, where tricks and racing share equal time (probably the rationale for the name change). Cruising around the tracks at swift velocities, *Trickstyle* simply feels fun. Control is tight, and pulling off the various maneuvers is certainly enjoyable. Only problem at this point, though, is that it seems amazingly difficult to chain tricks together, which is what made games like *Cool Boarders*. Here's to hoping it's rectified in the final rev (reducing gravity in general would probably help matters immensely).

As is the case with 90% of the DC games out there (*Seventh Cross* and *Sengoku Turb* keeping that percentage down with a few other offenders), *Trickstyle* is absolutely stunning visually. A solid frame-rate that hovers from 30 to 60 FPS (which is amazingly annoying as they only give you brief glimpses of the latter — at moments with minimal on-screen detail) **most** of the time. Sadly, when there's a massive amount of geometry on screen at once, the game will chug wickedly. My guess is that it has *Sega Rally 2* disease (a.k.a. developed under the nefarious Win CE environment). Pray with me that this isn't so — if it is, you'd better start attending church **twice** a week.

As it stands, this is more than likely the best initial Acclaim game to ever grace a console. And if it does nothing else, it may reduce the ire I feel towards PC ports — now if I could just erase the horror of PlayStation *Civilization*, I could sleep at night... **ECM**







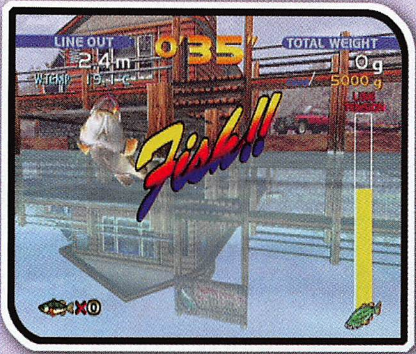









| PREVIEW | ECM: ABSOLUTELY STUNNING VISUALLY | DEVELOPER - CRITERION | 1 PLAYER |
|---|---|---|---|
| | | PUBLISHER - ACCLAIM | AVAILABLE SEPT. 9TH |







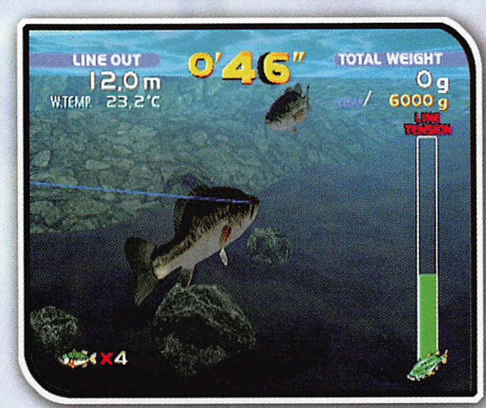


# Bass Fishing










I remember the summer days when my uncle would take me fishing at a nearby lake. Ah yes, those were the days... when my uncle taught me many important lessons in life, including: the ability to open a bottle with my teeth, how to blow snot bubbles out of both nostrils, the ability to burp on command, and the best pick-up lines of the time. He also taught me how to prepare the bait, cast a rod, and gut a fish. Which is why today, I blow snot bubbles when I sleep, have bad teeth, and find myself spending Friday nights alone with *Samurai Shodown 2*. But those happy summer days of casting my line, baiting fish, and catching anything (except mosquito bites) still remain in my head. And it was these feelings which *Bass Fishing* on the Dreamcast reminded me of.

## All that's missing are the brewskies and mosquitoes...

Now I know what you're thinking... why the hell would we play a fishing game on the Dreamcast? I mean, we want games like *Sonic Adventure*, *Virtua Fighter 3tb*, *Soul Calibur*, and *Shen Mue*, right? Well, first off, *Bass Fighing* is based on Sega's arcade fishing game, *Get Bass Fishing*; and we know how good those Sega arcade-to-home ports are, right? The graphics, from the fog to the biggest bass, are identical to the arcade. The effect of water splashing as a fish fights furiously for its life is very cool. There's very little graphic distortion, aside from some slowdown here and there. So if you're worried that the game is flawed graphically, you can sleep better at night knowing that the DC can handle Sega arcade ports with no difficulty.

Gameplay is dependent on whether you're playing with the normal DC pad, or the Ascii fishing reel. With the Ascii rod, the game rocks. Every motion, from casting your line to a specific location, to sinking the hook into the fish simulates real rod fishing. The vibration is an added bonus, and while it can't replace the pulling feedback you get from the arcade version, it's very well done. When playing with the regular DC pad, it's a bit of a pain because the shoulder buttons (R Shift namely) are what you use to reel in the line. Pressing the button halfway will reel it in slowly, while pressing it all the way will quickly draw your line in. It takes practice and getting used to, but playing the added Consumer mode, which offers even more lures than the arcade, will give you all the time you need.

*Bass Fishing* is a great game, but it isn't without its problems. While the load times aren't particularly long, their frequency is pretty high. *Bass Fishing* isn't a fishing simulation, where you must take into account factors like wind, weather, boat noise level, and gauge of your fishing line. On the other hand, it's a good fishing game that strips away all the tedious details, and leaves you with just the thrills and excitement of fishing.

*Dangohead once blew a snot bubble which drifted away and was found 5 days later by a small boy in a fishing village in Okinawa.*

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| VIEWPOINT SCORE: 88 | DEVELOPER - SEGA | 1-2 PLAYERS | DANGOHEAD: WHO SAYS FISHING IS BORING? |
| | PUBLISHER - SEGA | AVAILABLE 9/9/99 | |

R REVIEW


Hydro
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"...A MIX OF DEATH-DEFYING LEAPS, TIGHT RACING ACTION, AND THRILL-A-MINUTE TURNS AND BURNS."
GAMEPRO JUNE '99

# COMING SOON

COMING SOON COMING SOON COMING SOON COMING SOON COMING SOON COMING SOON COMING SOON







***CART: Flag to Flag*** (Sega) — A throwback to the days of *Virtua Racing, Cart: Flag to Flag* features sweet visuals, a multitude of car sickness inducing tracks, and simulation type racing. Now, where's my *Daytona 2*?







***Soul Fighter*** (Piggyback Entertainment) — A throwback to the days of *Golden Axe, Soul Fighter* features some very slick special effects, magic attacks, and cool looking enemies. Let's hope they make it multi-player.







***Armada*** (Sega) — A throwback to the days of *Star Control* (see a pattern developing here?), take control of a fleet of starships as you prevent an alien armada of vessels from invading the galaxy.







***Castlevania: Resurrection*** (Konami) — With awesome background design and excellent special effects, *Castlevania: Resurrection* is shaping up to be one of the most visually spectacular DC games.







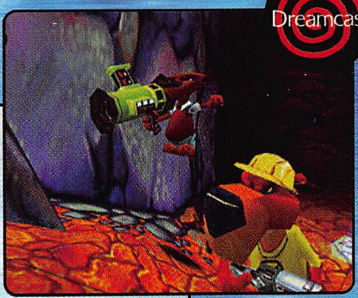
***Evolution*** (Tommo) — How can you not love an RPG when your main character's name is Mag Launcher? Cool character designs and a zany story will make *Evolution* one RPG you will not forget.

# Coming Soon

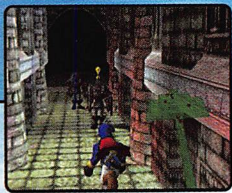


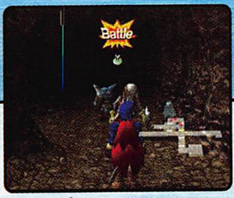


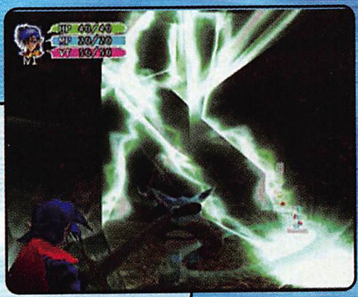




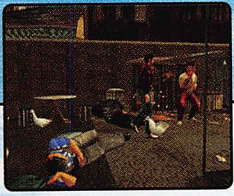
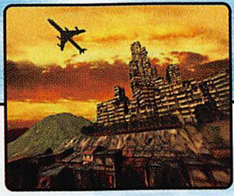
***Furballs*** (Bizarre Creations) — Cutesy, furry creatures are not to be reckoned with when they're armed to the teeth with blasters, rocket launcher, and other items o' big hurt. One of the more bizarre titles on the DC.

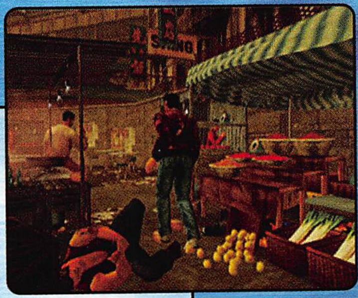







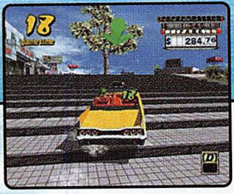
***Climax Landers*** (Sega) — One of the most anticipated titles on the Dreamcast, explore the immense magical world of *Climax Landers.* Traditional RPG gameplay mixed with splendorific visuals, and you've got a winner.

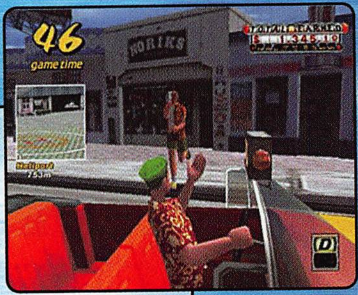






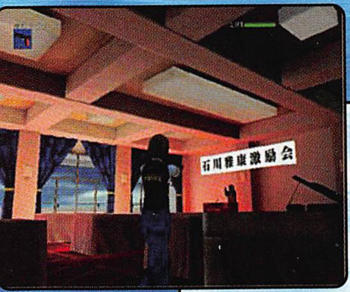
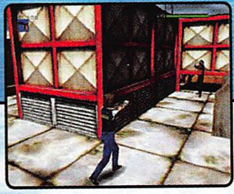
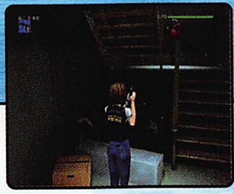
***Shen Mue*** (Sega) — Perhaps the MOST anticipated title on the Dreamcast, the first chapter of *Shen Mue* is set to come out October (of a possible 15 chapters!). Check out next issue for a full blow out!

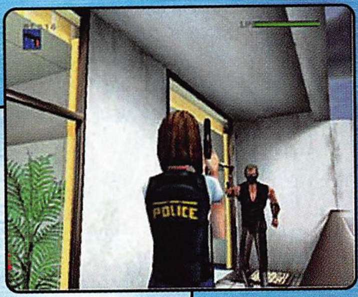





***Crazy Taxi*** (Sega) — Ah, the life of a taxicab driver. Picking up passengers, cordially greeting them as they get in your cab, and then driving like a madman in the wrong lane to get to their destination. Sounds like a good game idea, huh?




***Undercover*** (Sega) — Another *Resident Evil*-like game, *Undercover* puts you in the role of a female "Mulder-like" police officer investigating a murder, only to fall into something bigger.

# Japan Now!







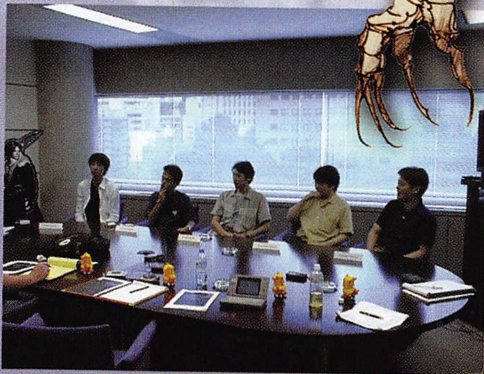

In conjunction with Square of Japan, Squaresoft held a press conference in Tokyo, Japan for *Vagrant Story*. Various editors from major U.S. gaming publications were invited to attend this surprise event. After getting a rush-job on a passport, I was off to another land. The plane ride from our office to Narita took just under 12 hours. My trip didn't begin well, as I left over $500 in CDs on the plane — not a happy camper. A larger portion of the editors arrived at the Miyako Hotel on the afternoon of July 13th. After checking into the hotel, we headed out for dinner and some Kirin.

The real fun would come the next day at Square's headquarters. Tomoyuki Takechi, CEO of Square, began the conference by expressing interest in Nintendo's forthcoming Dolphin console. Although he spoke very briefly about the Dolphin, it was definitely a sign of things to come. We can only speculate, but is it possible that Nintendo and Square will have a future again?

Mr. Takechi also clued us in on the status and expectations for *Final Fantasy VIII*. Worldwide, *Final Fantasy VII* has sold 7 million units to date. Square would like *FFVIII* to surpass that number by one million units. Square believes it can reach this goal too. In the company's eyes, not many other publishers are capable of creating stories as involving or game design as well thought out as its own line-up, particularly in the RPG realm.

Mr. Yasumi Matsuno (developer of *Final Fantasy Tactics*) and Michio Okamiya (Publicity Producer) spoke about their latest project, *Vagrant Story*. It's an adventure game that combines some of the most popular elements of *Resident Evil*, *Parasite Eve*, and *Metal Gear Solid*. Expect a 5-10 hour adventure the first time through, but up to 40 hours of gameplay if you find everything. Borrowing its battle system from *Parasite Eve*, *Vagrant Story* ups the ante with precision attacks. Now when you attack an opponent, you can choose which part of his body you'd like to attack first. If he has a strong weapon in his right hand, you might want to take out the use of his right arm. If he's a quick enemy, taking out his legs would be good. Sometimes dead enemies will yield weapons or armor. Weapons and armor are very important in the world of *Vagrant Story* since there are no item or weapon shops.

The story takes place in a different universe than that of *Final Fantasy*. The hero, Ashley Riot, is a member of the



The SQUARE FF VIII development team field questions from various reporters as loving Chocobos watch in sheer admiration. <Nandesu te?! Chocobo ga?>

## ベイグラントストーリー
## VAGRANT STORY™



Takashi Tokita - right (producer of *Chocobo Racing*) and Akitoshi Kawadu - left (producer of *Saga Frontier 2*), pose for the mighty GF camera!







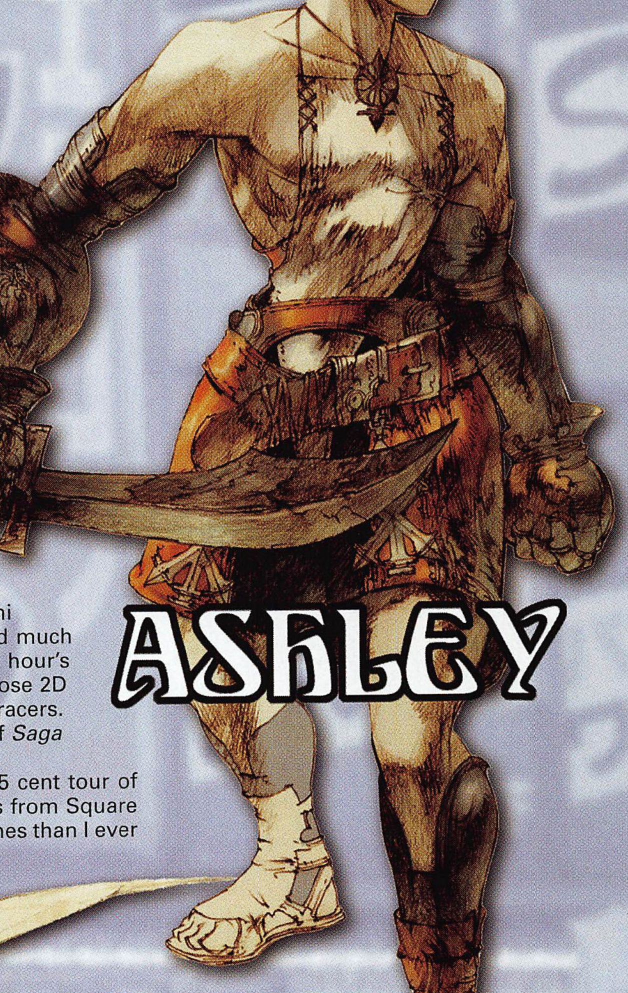


VKPs (Valendia Knights of the People) and must bring justice to the kingdom of Valendia by stopping a group of terrorists, led by Sydney. Anyone who liked the art in *Final Fantasy Tactics* will be stunned by the look of *Vagrant Story*. Characters converse in text bubbles not unlike comics. There's no spoken dialogue, but that means that a localized U.S. version won't have awful voice acting. In place of rendered cinematics, the story is advanced using real-time graphics like *Metal Gear Solid*.

After our time with Mr. Matsuno and Mr. Okamiya was up, we had an hour to question the *Final Fantasy VIII* design team. Even cooler for me was the chance to speak with and question both Takashi Tokita (producer of *Chocobo Racing*) and Akitoshi Kawadu (producer of *Saga Frontier* and *Saga Frontier 2*). We learned much about the yellow bird and the rigors of making *Saga Frontier 2* in an hour's time. An interesting fact about *Chocobo Racing* is that Mr. Tokita chose 2D pre-rendered sprites in lieu of polygons to maximize the amount of racers. From Mr. Okamiya we learned that the hand-drawn backgrounds of *Saga Frontier 2* took a crew of 25 people more than a year to complete.

When the interviews were done, our group was treated to a 25 cent tour of Square's offices in Japan. However, our time with the kind folks from Square wasn't over. After learning more about the company and its games than I ever thought possible, we headed back to the Miyako hotel.

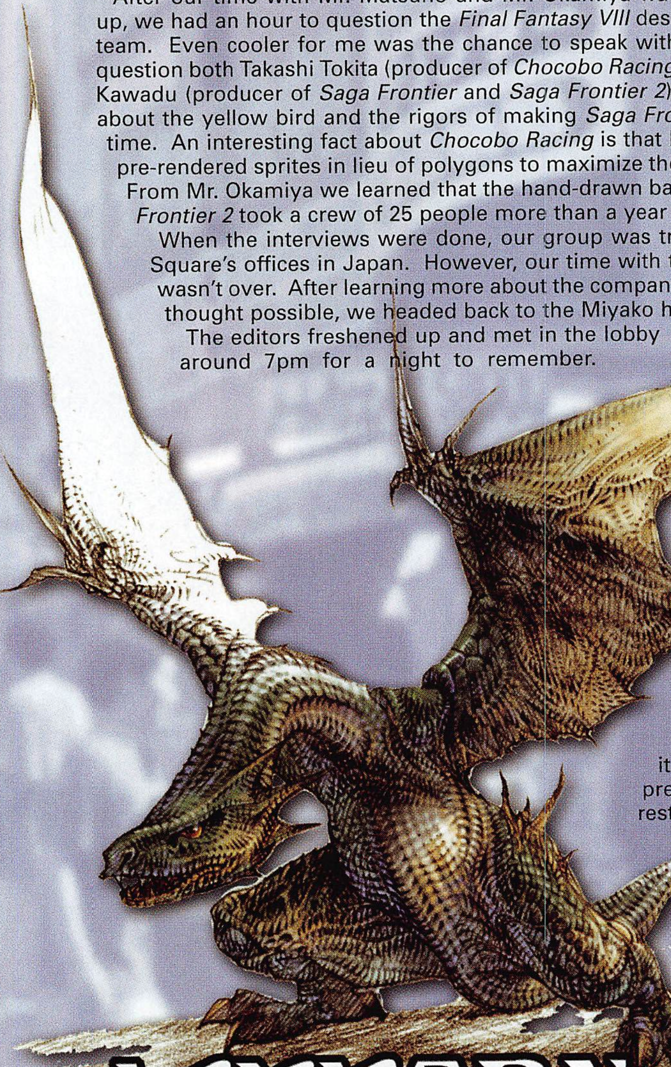
The editors freshened up and met in the lobby around 7pm for a night to remember.



ASHLEY







WYVERN

Members of the press along with Square had a traditional Japanese dinner; there was sake and tofu all around. We spent two hours at the restaurant, mostly downing cold sake. Not everyone made it out of the restaurant — how shall I put it — sober? One member of the press was primarily to blame, but it was a lot of fun. After leaving the restaurant, those of us who could still stand headed over to an Irish pub in Roppongi. From there we made it to Game World, a small arcade located smack dab in the center of a mass of bars and clubs. As if that wasn't enough, the next stop was Lexington Queen — a bar known for its clientele, nothing but models from agencies around the world. We danced and drank the night away at this club. Our group dwindled as the morning drew nearer. Only two of us were left around 5am. One editor from an east coast weekly publication could barely remember the night. Another editor apparently had "problems." All in all the people at Square know how to make games and throw a press bash. Special thanks to Lisa and J.I. **Cerberus**







**This Week, On *Shovelware Theater*...**

One of the problems that comes along with Sega's intense focus on making the Dreamcast 'developer-friendly' (read 'crutch for less-astute coders') is that they may have done their job *too* well. Allowing for quick and easy ports from PC to DC, developers in record numbers are lining up for licenses, eager to score a little extra coin with about as much effort as it takes me to alienate whomever I'm meeting for the first time ("ECM has the tact of a rabid Great White shark."). After dealing with the foolishness of coding *Rally 2* in the WinCE environment (was that to prove a point?!) and the über-painful *Incoming*, comes Rage Software's second DC outing, *Expendable*. Which now leads us to the ultimate question: Is it shovelware or an enhanced, ultra-hard-core console port? I'll give you three guesses and, well, you know how it goes...



**You're Not Half-bad, but Your Sister? Now We're Talkin'!**

If I had to characterize (stereotype?) *Expendable*, I'd liken it to some of the women I've been known to date: incredible-looking, with not a lot going on upstairs, and who also happen to have sisters who're *that* much more attractive (but still in desperate need of a new bulb). Translation: While the DC rev of *Expendable* is certainly one of the most gorgeous games yet, the gameplay is incredibly repetitive with very little in the way of variation (there isn't even a bloody 'jump' button!); worse yet, the PC







# EXPENDABLE

version actually looks **better**, with full bump-mapping and support of higher-res modes (one look at the water effect in the PC version and you'll wet yourself). While I didn't expect the game to actually perform at a higher-res (not much point on a TV), I fully expected that it would a) run at a higher frame rate, and b) at the very least, support **all** the effects of the PC rev including some DC-only additions. Thankfully (?!), the gameplay is just as lackluster and repetitive on the PC, with the same shoot, shoot, shoot with no variation and no reason to play the game other than to experience the eye candy. Simply put, games like *One* and *Apocalypse* on PS crush *Expendable* (sad but true, Sega-faithful).





**Grab a Shovel...**

After this year's E3, I was in love with *Expendable*. Now that I've dug a little deeper, I'm sorry to say that this isn't the game it should have been (you keep hoping your children will grow up right, <sigh>). I'm going to say this once and then not mention it again (until it invariably happens with the next poor man's PC-to-DC port): Games like *Incoming*, *Expendable*, *Red Line Racer* and their ilk (PC ports with sub-par graphics and repetitive gameplay) have no place on Sega's newest hardware. The only thing they do is make people look at the DC as 'old' technology and simply increase the cries from throngs of PS zealots making noises that the PSY is the console to wait for — not that I blame them after playing through the aforementioned games. Here's to hoping beyond hope that these games **never** see the light of day in the U.S. and Europe, and if they do, that they're radically enhanced. Somehow, I have the sickening feeling that we're getting them — like it or not.





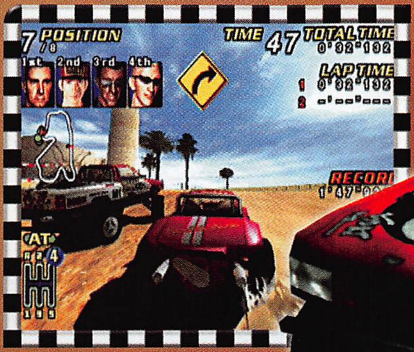


*ECM is, um, well, what can I say... err, he's, well... Hmmmm... My folks taught me if you haven't anything nice to say, then — uh, whoops, too late.*



| R REVIEW | ECM: Remember kids, just say, 'No!' to shovelware! | Developer - Rage Software | 1-2 Players | Viewpoint Score: 63 |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | Publisher - Imagineer | Available Now Japan | |













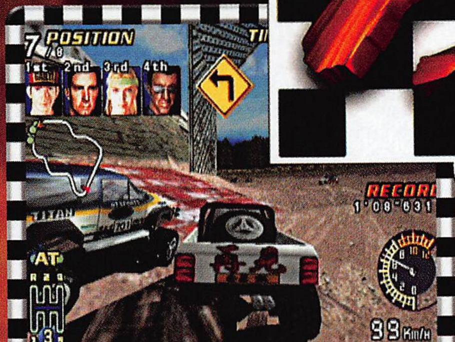
Good games are always welcome, and good racing games are embraced with open arms in my book. Anyone that knows me knows that I like all types of video games; and these same people know that I love racing games. As long as it has a track and some form of transportation, I will try it. Well, I've tried *Buggy Heat*, played it through Championship Mode with different vehicles, and I don't like this game.

Sounds a bit harsh to flat out say I don't like a game, doesn't it? But I have good reason to not like *Buggy Heat*. First of all, it really tries to be *Power Drift*. I loved *Power Drift*, even the half-assed PC Engine rendition. So how does *Buggy Heat* attempt to mimic a game older than even the Sega Genesis? Okay, let's see; dune buggies, on and off-road tracks, high-speed gameplay, and character marquees at the top left of the screen... is that enough for you? You'd think a game that copies a classic arcade hit would be a solid title. Alas, it's not. My lack of enjoyment from *Buggy Heat* stems mostly from its bad physics engine. Part of racing, whether on-road or off, is how a vehicle handles and reacts to its surroundings. Saying that the vehicles in *Buggy Heat* don't handle the way real buggies should is an understatement. Traveling upwards of 80 miles per hour, one expects a certain type of collision with an object. When slamming into a barrier of some sort in *Buggy Heat*, your vehicle will come to a halt without any flips or other sort of fanfare — it just stops, and that's wrong. Colliding with other racers is just as uneventful. Slaloming through sand dunes doesn't feel right either. I understand that off-road racing is different from its asphalt-based brethren, but this is ridiculous. Many a time I found my buggy sliding around uncontrollably in a spin that shouldn't have happened at my current velocity. Maybe the developers should have spent less time creating nice graphics and more time on physics, features, and overall gameplay.

The Dreamcast is a relatively new system. Programmers still have some time before they become accustomed to the architecture. Some developers already have the hang of things. There are too many games out on the shelf right now for you to fork out your hard earned cash for *Buggy Heat*. Wait for a real off-road racer or pick up *Extreme Racer*.

*Cerberus loves taking his Power Wheels out for a weekend romp through Woodland Hills and that little hill in his backyard.*





# Buggy Heat™

バギーヒート

| Viewpoint Score :64 | Developer - CRI | 1-2 Players | Cerberus: Power Drift, please... |
|---|---|---|---|
| | Publisher - CSK | Available Now | |

R Review

Under Construction



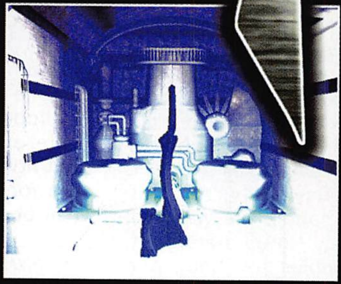






# Frame Gride











I'm going to let you readers in on a not-so-little secret about this pastry-head. I am probably the biggest *Virtual On: Oratorio Tangram* fan there is in the U.S. So you can imagine how much I've been anticipating the Dreamcast version of this heavenly game. It's all very simple, there will be no mech fighting game on the Dreamcast that can compare to the might of *VOOT* on the DC.

So, when the first shots of From Software's *Frame Gride* appeared in the office, ECM hollered with joy and kept taunting me that the mech designs were better than *VOOT*. I scoffed at his outlandish claims, reasoning that his missed morning Twinkies were the source of his maniacal ravings. Playing the game a bit at E3, I was impressed with the visuals, but a bit disappointed with the controls.

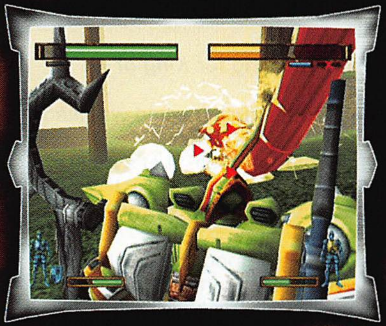
Then one day, the *Frame Gride* final landed on my desk, with a parting "Better than *VOOT*!" from ECM. Well, after spending considerable time upgrading my medieval monster, jousting with ironclad juggernauts, and forging new weapons of destruction, I have come to the realization that *Frame Gride*... <drum roll please>... isn't better than *VOOT*. But it's one of the best DC games out right now, and you would be a fool if you didn't get it.

Mixing the mech combat gameplay of *Armored Core* with the mystical setting of the Middle Ages, *Frame Gride* is a game with a definite sense of style. When starting a new game, you'll be asked a series of questions. Depending on your answers, you'll get a mech of varying size, strength, and style, with different weapons and equipment. This is very similar to *Ogre Battle* and *Ultima*, and likewise you feel like you're being recruited into an order of chivalrous knights. Once you have your two-story knight, it's time to take him on a tour of the realm.

Visually, *Frame Gride* is a sight to see. The style of the robots hails back to a time of plate-mailed warriors, codes of chivalry, and mystical lands of lore. The ornamental details on the mechs are fantastic, right down to the intricate lines of the chestplates, helms, and gauntlets.

Special effects are, for the most part, wonderful. While there is no true light sourcing for weapon effects, that matters little when your eyes widen at the sight of a flaming

| R REVIEW | DANGOHEAD: THE QUESTION REMAINS: WHAT'S A GRIDE? | DEVELOPER - FROM SOFTWARE | 1-2 PLAYERS | VIEWPOINT SCORE: 90 |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | PUBLISHER - FROM SOFTWARE | AVAILABLE NOW JAPAN | |



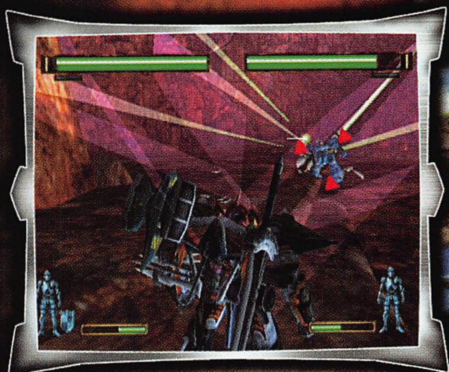



dragon spiraling toward your hapless foe, or a flock of magical birds heading straight for a helpless target. Arenas range from bridge-like fossils to full-fledged castles. My only complaint is the lack of subtle environmental effects, like leaving footprints in the snow, kicking up sand trails, or bubble effects when you're underwater. But overall, the visual delights in *FG* makes it one of the best-looking Dreamcast games so far.

Gameplay is a mixed bag. If you're a fan of *Armored Core*, you'll love this game, as it plays nearly identical to From Software's well-known mech fighter. But also like *Armored Core*, it has the same control and camera difficulties. What I do love is the new system of upgrading equipment. As you progress further in the game, you'll receive valuable crystals in combat which you can use to forge new equipment, weapons, and upgrades for your robot.



You can also use these crystals to make 'squires.' While these squires aren't the traditional 'Carry my lance, Boy, and tend to my horse'-types, when summoned in battle, they are good for support in attacking the enemy or setting up energy shields. In fact, it wasn't the combat I was looking forward to every time I fired this game up. It was forging new weapons, upgrading equipment, building new squires, and managing your robot. I couldn't get enough of the "mech ranching" elements in this game, and I wish there were more "secret" items to forge.



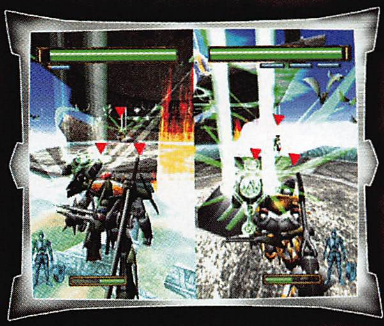
In the sound department, I like most of the music from the game, though there are a number of monotonous tracks that will make you hit that mute button faster than Eggo can hit on a married woman.

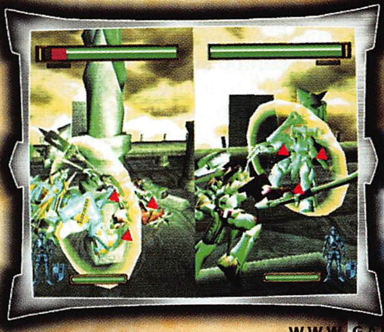
While *Frame Gride* is an awesome title, it's not without its faults. As mentioned above, the game has issues with control and camera. While you are piloting a two ton piece of machinery that would be sluggish in the real world, overall control takes some time getting used to. The biggest fault this game has is not implementing some kind of "lock-on" button that would keep the camera locked-on the enemy mech. If *Frame Gride* had the lock-on feature from *Zelda:OOT*, the gameplay would be much more enjoyable. Lastly, load times are very long. This is the first Dreamcast game in which I got up, went to the fridge, made a nice turkey sandwich with dijon mustard, came back, and it wasn't done loading yet.



Despite the control issues and loading, if you're a Dreamcast owner, don't miss out on this adventure in a world filled with magic, gothic style, and big, bad, broadsword-wielding behemoths.

*When not protecting arcades from the dangers of scrubs, Dangohead enjoys griding to the tunes of Charlie Brown (much to the chagrin of his GF colleagues).*







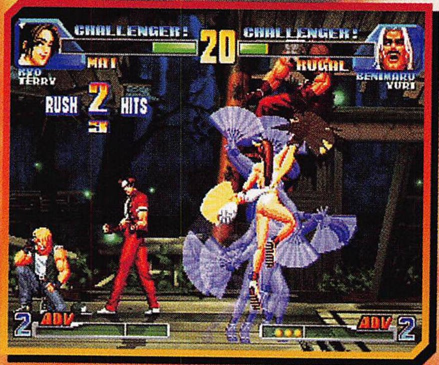





Transcript of the first design meeting for *King of Fighters* at SNK headquarters:
Producer: Okay guys, the people upstairs said we need another game to milk to death. Any ideas?
Lead Designer: Hey, I have a great idea! Let's have some really cool innovative gameplay features! We can also make a sequel each year that has nothing new to offer.
Producer: Well, that sounds like a good idea, but won't it be difficult to improve on our own innovation?
Assistant Designer: You see, that's the beauty of this. We implement some never-before-seen elements like tag team battles, rolling, projectile evasion and such.
Lead Designer: Players are dumb and won't even notice that we're actually using the same exact game with only new characters and backgrounds.
Producer: We'll make a killing! We'll save a ton of money on development costs. Do it, do it now! And finish it in two weeks.

Okay, so maybe the first design meeting didn't go exactly like that, but you wouldn't be able to tell from the way each *KOF* game has turned out. *King of Fighters* for the Dreamcast didn't make the trip home in perfect form. SNK played with the backgrounds... and they look beautiful. Characters remain fluidly animated sprites, but the locales are rendered in 3D. However, good looks don't make up for the game's shortcomings. Namely, the lack of any real gameplay innovations. Fans of the series argue that SNK has modified the franchise and created more balanced gameplay. If that's the case, I can't see it. Recycled fighters and special attacks don't warrant the creation of a new game. I know Capcom is just as guilty of milking its titles, but Capcom isn't as obvious about it. Compare *Street Fighter Alpha* to its subsequent sequels and you will see a difference — from Custom Combos to the "–ism" selection. As for *King of Fighters*, even five years later I don't notice much of a difference between *KOF '94* and *KOF '99*.

# THE KING OF FIGHTERS
## DREAM MATCH 1999



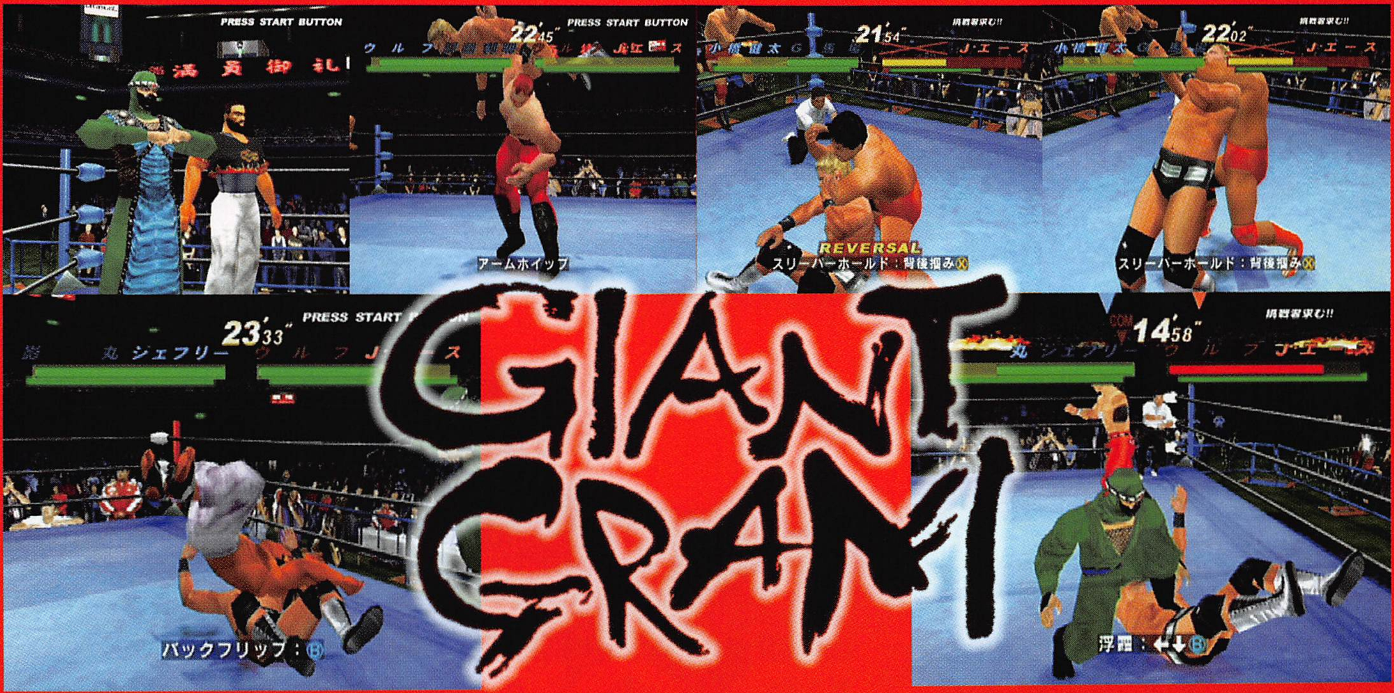

In the right hands, *KOF* can also be very cheap. In some circles it's referred to as *King of Block Damage* because of its pattern-based gameplay. *KOF* isn't all bad, it can be very fun to play. It's easy to pick up and mess around with. Control is responsive, speed is about right, there's a solid combo system, but it's just the same game. Adding insult to injury, *Street Fighter Alpha 3* is available for the Dreamcast. For me there is no decision to make, *SFA 3* is a much more enjoyable game. *KOF* has a large fan base, and if you're one of those fans, you won't be disappointed. Not a fan? Grab some *Alpha 3*... **C**






| R REVIEW | CERBERUS: MAI HASN'T LOST HER, ERM, CHARM. | DEVELOPER - SNK<br>PUBLISHER - SNK | 1-2 PLAYERS<br>AVAILABLE NOW JAPAN | VIEWPOINT SCORE: 73 |
|---|---|---|---|---|

# GIANT GRAM




Wrestling as a hobby hasn't been a part of my diet for many years now. When I say wrestling, I mean WWF and a bit of WCW here and there. And when I say WWF, I'm talking Hulk Hogan, Andre the Giant, and Randy "Macho Man" Savage WWF, nothing to come out of the power plant within the last 5-10 years. Japanese wrestling is something I've neither bothered to get into nor been interested in, though wrestling has just as large a following in the Land of the Rising Sun as baseball or even Sumo.

Not including some older games in the wrestling genre, most have really been lackluster. American Technos had some good ones like *WWF Superstars* and who can forget Nintendo's *Pro Wrestling* for the NES? Although, there have been way too many bad wrestling games for me not to be a skeptic. When *Giant Gram* appeared on my desk I wasn't very enthused. Only the thought of Jeffrey, Wolf, and Kage as playable wrestlers made booting up the Dreamcast a little easier. Still, it's a good thing I was forced to play *Giant Gram*, otherwise I wouldn't have given this game a decent chance. Not that *Giant Gram* instantly held my interest, it took a while for the game to grow on me. My initial reaction to the game wasn't a good one, but little by little it became a whole lot of fun.

What's the first thing I noticed? The graphics are amazing. Wrestlers will breathe while lying on the mat; and muscles and joints move appropriately. It's really scary to see them in motion — no amount of pictures can do them justice. Characters that don't wear masks have facial expressions that vary depending upon the situation. Skin and other textures are very sharp and don't blur up. The visuals will hold your attention long enough for you to figure out the controls. Once you've got the control down, everything changes. It's so much fun to reverse a hold and get your opponent in a headlock. Sure, like other wrestling games it can be a mash fest at times, but it comes with the territory. If it'll make you feel any better, the battle of buttons is very rare.

I can't believe I'm actually recommending a wrestling game. At the very least give *Giant Gram* a chance — if it means anything, I'm not a wrestling fan and I liked it. As far as wrestling games go, this is as good as it gets — beautiful graphics, stellar sounds, a play-by-play announcer, custom characters, speedy controls, and a wicked four player mode. Only a guest appearance by El Niño could make this one better.

*Cerberus has, of late, taken to visiting local gyms and weight rooms wearing various pastel colored pairs of tights and saying over and over, "Whatchoo gonna do?"*



| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| Viewpoint Score: 83 | Developer - Sega | 1-4 Players | Cerberus: It's a 128-bit sleeper hold! |
| | Publisher - Sega | Available Now | |

Review

Under Construction

Dreamcast



Seiken Densetsu — two words you don't hear often in the U.S. Since the only game in the series which made it Stateside was *Secret of Mana* on the SNES (*SDII* in Japan). Now, Square of Japan has just released the fourth installment, and already Square EA has announced that this beautiful title will be localized and ready for North American consumption by the year 2000.

It's almost too easy to sing the praises of this game, since there are so many features crammed into this package. What you may not know is that the *Seiken Densetsu* games have all been multi-player. While *Legend of Mana* doesn't use the multi-tap to allow 3-players, you can adventure with a single other friend. The third member of your party, while not human-controlled, can be a monster who you create yourself. Like *Jade Cocoon*, this game allows you to capture, breed, and bring monsters into battle with you. The more they fight, the more they gain experience. So with you and a buddy controlling two characters and the third being a hand-made creature, *LoM* brings new meaning to the term "family game." The multi-player option in RPGs isn't anything new, since it's been done in previous *Seiken Densetsu's*, *Tales of Destiny/Phantasia*, and the almighty *Dungeon Explorer* games (spanning everything from the PC Engine CD to the Sega CD). Still,

# 聖剣伝説® LEGEND OF MANA







it's a nice easter egg to have, in case you and a sibling are fighting for possession of the single controller in your RPGs. Now the two of you can fight over which door to go through in this RPG. Decisions, decisions...

If you're a big fan of monster creation, chances are you'll like the ability to make your own equipment as well. Everything from magical instruments to weapons to equipment can all be handcrafted in this game.

The visuals are fresh, bearing a 'children's book' art style that looks like it's done with water colors. Just pore over every centimeter of these juicy screenshots, and you'll see nothing but colors and hand-drawn goodness. Think about this, *Saga Frontier 2* took a year to do the graphics alone, and *Legend of Mana's* visuals are even better .

The only bad news I have to report is that it's going to be a while before we see the domestic version. *Saga Frontier 2* and *Vagrant Story* are both scheduled for an early 2000 release here, so we probably shouldn't expect *Legend* until the middle of the year. Now if you can't wait that long, you can always buy the import version, which is currently on sale **and** has playable demos to die for. E









| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| P PREVIEW | EGGO: NOT ENOUGH MANA... | DEVELOPER - SQUARESOFT | 1-2 PLAYERS |
| | | PUBLISHER - SQUARE EA | AVAILABLE 2000 |



yamaneko








Ever since *Chrono Trigger* debuted on the SNES, it's had a devout group of followers who've been crying for a sequel. At first, it looked like there was going to be one on the SNES. Talk was in the air, expectations were high, but then all of a sudden the talk died down and the sequel disappeared. But just because the game vanished, doesn't mean the expectations did. Fast forward to the present, and Square's developing for a different console. New games are seeing sequels (*Saga Frontier*, *Xenogears*, *Parasite Eve*), and someone decides that *Chrono Trigger* is finally due. Once again, speculation and anticipation are high. However, once the facts start to emerge, the once vociferous lot of fans quickly grow quiet.

The first disturbing fact which showed up was that Akira Toriyama (*Dragonball*, *Dragon Quest*, *Tobal*, and *Chrono Trigger*) wasn't doing character design for *Chrono Cross* (discovered in last month's interview with Hironobu Sakaguchi). Instead, the duties are being handled by Nobuteru Yuuki (*The Record of Lodoss War* anime, *Escaflowne* TV series, and the *Battle Angel* OVA). The second unnerving discovery was that the game was 3D. Polygonal characters, pre-rendered backgrounds, full 3D battles — just like *Final Fantasy VIII*. Why couldn't Square deliver a 2D game like *Legend of Mana* that was *Chrono*-based?

On the bright side, battles are thoughtful and have a very *Xenogear*-ish feel. Every round, you're allowed to choose from weak to strong attacks, as you string together combos of attacks. If you choose to use weaker attacks, you're rewarded with more strikes and your magic levels rise with every hit that connects. Magic spells are listed in a bracket according to their level. Higher level spells are more powerful, but take longer to 'charge up' through normal hits. What's cool is you can combo magic with normal hits; so beat on an enemy three times then heal a partner in one turn!

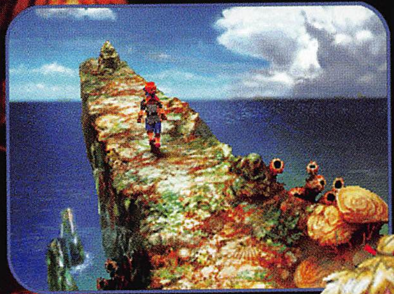
Like the rest of the previewed Square games in these pages, *Chrono Cross* will be out in Japan this fall, with the U.S. version coming here in 2000. Assuming you give it a fair chance, *Chrono Cross* is a promising RPG, just don't view it as a sequel to *Chrono Trigger*. If you take *CC* for what it is, without burdening it with expectations of what could've been, then you'll see it shows promise. But if you can't let go your "what ifs," then you'd best crawl under your rock, pull the "Welcome" mat in with you, and cry in your milk for better days. I'll be waiting patiently for fall to arrive. **E**

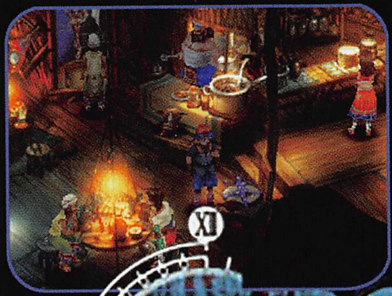








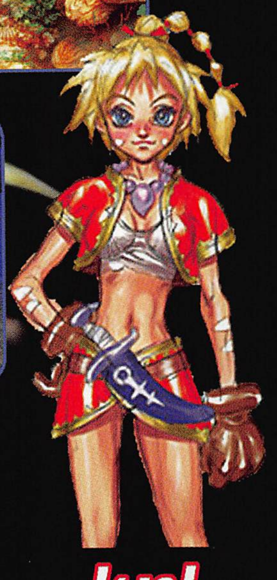









serge



kid

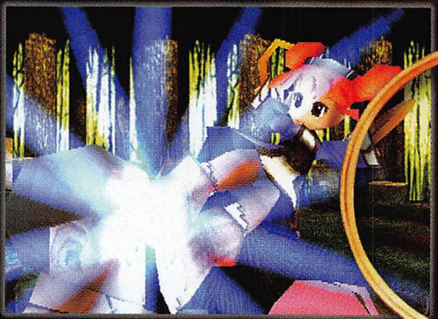
# CHRONO CROSS™ クロノ・クロス

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| Developer - Squaresoft | 1 Player | Eggo: Well, it's about time... |
| Publisher - Square EA | Available 2000 | |

P PREVIEW







While all the Square-heads out there are talking about *Chrono Cross*, *Legend of Mana*, and *Vagrant Story*, *Dew Prism* is just as much a contender as the rest of them, but it won't get as much press. This is the sort of game that can easily slip through the cracks, like a wreck in the wake of Square's media blitzkrieg of titles. But while I perused the wonders of Square's preview disc 5 (packaged with the import *Legend of Mana*), *Dew Prism* was the title I had the most fun with right off the bat.

First thing I noticed was that the environment and characters are incredibly solid for a 32-bit title. The characters are very large, well-animated, and gouraud-shaded for that squeaky clean look. This is such a gorgeous game that it shows developers are still unlocking the PlayStation's potential, five years after its debut (shades of *Donkey Kong Country*?).

Environments are polygonal, yet they have a distinct 2D feel... Are my eyes deceiving me or is that parallax I see?

# DEWPRISM
## デュープリズム








I wouldn't call the backgrounds "2D with depth" (a term coined with *Bomberman Hero*), but they're not fully 3D because you can't rotate the camera. Call it 2.75 D, if you will... being more akin to 3D than 2.5D.

Enough with the techno-babble, the game has two main characters, whom you choose to control at the beginning of the game like Chris or Jill in *Resident Evil*. Also, depending on your selection, the other character will interact with you as the story progresses.

What's interesting is the characters (Lew and Mint) have completely different play mechanics. Mint is a magic user who derives magic points from bashing monsters over the head with her Dual Rings O' Death. And once she has the MPs, she can cast spells to complement her ring attacks. Lew, on the other hand, is more of a 'monster rancher.' For every baddie he cuts down with his sword (generic masculine weapon of choice for all action adventurers), a coin is left behind, which lets him transform into the monster he just dispatched (a play mechanic we've seen recently in *Jade Cocoon*). However, Lew's monster transformations also give him the ability to sneak about, open new doors, solve puzzles, and even escape falling death (by turning into a winged dragon).

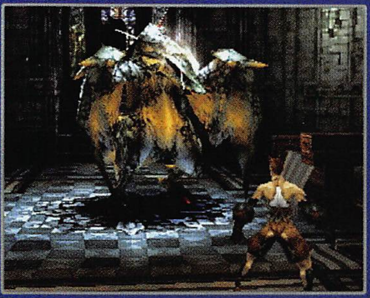
Thankfully, Square EA has announced they are bringing this game to the States, so you can all add it to your list of titles to look forward to next year. *Dew Prism* will be out in Japan this October, but we won't see a U.S. version till the next millenium (don't worry, it's only next year). But this just shows there are games to look forward to after *Vagrant Story* and *Chrono Cross.* E

| P PREVIEW | EGGO: Do the Dew. | Developer - Squaresoft | 1 Player |
|---|---|---|---|
| | | Publisher - Square EA | Available 2000 |

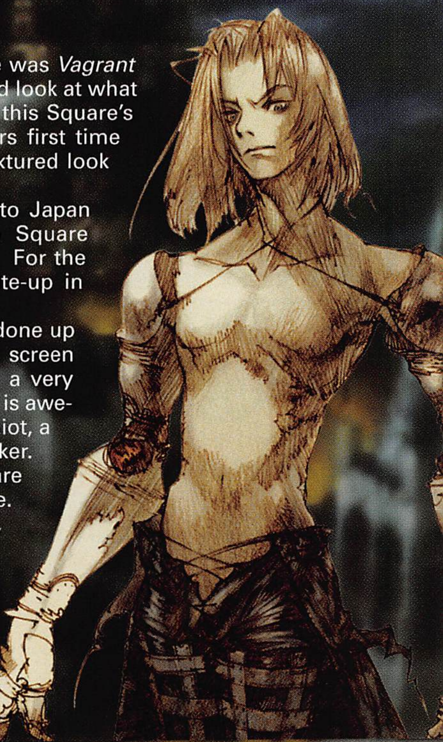
# Vagrant Story™

ベイグラントストーリー







The lone title on Preview No. 5 which wasn't playable was *Vagrant Story*. Seen only in movie form, it still gave us a good look at what to expect come final time. Many people are calling this Square's take on *Metal Gear Solid* because it's a short (5-10 hours first time through) action adventure which has that grainy, grey-textured look just like Konami's hit.

*GameFan's* own executive editor Cerberus was flown to Japan recently for an international press conference where Square announced *Vagrant Story* for Japanese and U.S. release. For the full wrap-up and low-down on this game, read his write-up in Japan Now of this issue.

Getting back to the demo disc, *Vagrant Story's* movie is done up in true cinematic fashion, complete with green preview screen ("this preview is intended for all audiences"). Featuring a very moody Middle Ages castle setting, this game's atmosphere is awesome. The storyline follows the adventure of one Ashley Riot, a secret agent and member of a group called Riskbreaker. You're in the mansion of Duke Bordova, and his people are searching for you, thinking you murdered the good Duke. The rest of the movie shows you sneaking about the castle, confronting a bad guy, and lastly coming face to face with a large dragon.

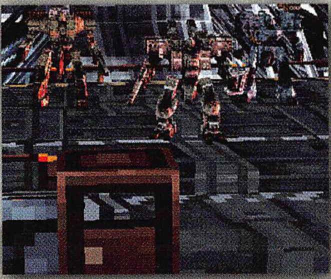
The movie ends like a true Hollywood movie trailer with one last dramatic scene, designed to leave you wanting more. The Japanese version of this game will be out later this year, while the U.S. game is set for early 2000. Stay tuned because you certainly haven't heard the last of this one.

# front mission 3™

フロントミッション サード





Four of the five games packaged with the import *Seiken Densetsu: Legend of Mana* are coming Stateside. *Front Mission 3*, however, is the lone title destined to be stranded in the Land of the Rising Sun, alongside other Square titles which never made it here like *Tobal 2*, *Soukaigi*, and *Racing Lagoon* (some things are best left forgotten). For those not up on their *FM*, it's basically a strategy RPG with the ever-popular mech theme. Controlling teams of giant robots, you wage a turn-based war with the enemy.

No announcement of a U.S. version has come yet, and considering we haven't seen any of the *Front Mission* games thus far, we probably never will. So if you're dying to play the latest installment in this series, you only need wait till September 9th, when the game comes out in Japan. Then it's up to you to cross those pricey import waters, because I seriously doubt *FM* is coming to you.





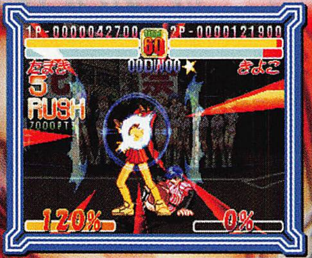


| | | |
|---|---|---|
| DEVELOPER - SQUARESOFT | 1 PLAYER | EGGO: *METAL GEAR...* |
| PUBLISHER - SQUARE EA | AVAILABLE: VS - 2000; FM3 - YEAH, RIGHT. | SQUARE STYLE. |

PREVIEW

# ASUKA
# あすか120%ファイナル
## BURNING Fest. FINAL





There's three types of imports: the good, the *Asuka*, and the ugly. Some Japanese games, like *Tobal 2*, deserve to be brought over here — while some, like *Tech Romancer*, should have never gotten past customs. *Asuka* is an import which I pray never sees light of day here because it's just plain bad.

When I say bad, it's not *Deadly Arts* bad (when people argue that video games cause violence, they have a point, but they cite all the wrong games. Spending 40 hard-earned dollars on *Criticom* or *Deadly Arts* is enough to make you want to kill somebody). Thankfully, *Asuka* is above that level of awfulness... nor is it as bad as *War Gods* or *BioFreaks*. Though it will never rise above CD-coaster status, *Asuka* is better than the ugly Midway twins... barely.





*Asuka* is, in no way shape or form, worth a purchase. Don't even consider it, or I'll turn you into the gamers' union, and we'll revoke your hard-core license. Cerberus makes the point that this game makes you laugh, and admittedly I had a good time slapping him down while discovering the snapped play mechanics of *Asuka.* But just because a game makes you smile doesn't mean it's worthy spending money on. After all, I had fun smashing the producer of *War Gods* at his own game with my overpowering Punch-Punch-Rock combo with Tak. But playing a broken game gets boring fast, and that's what *Asuka* is — a "broken" fighting game whose gameplay is as shallow as a guest on the Jerry Springer show.

The play mechanics are so snapped that I envision the game's development as this:
Marketing Guy #1: OK, we need a gimmick...
Marketing Guy #2: I know! Japanese school girls in uniforms!
Marketing Guy #1: Already been done, so we'd better dress 'em in different sports outfits — baseball, tennis, gymnastics... That way, every hormone-charged Japanese youth can either find a character to identify with or fantasize over.



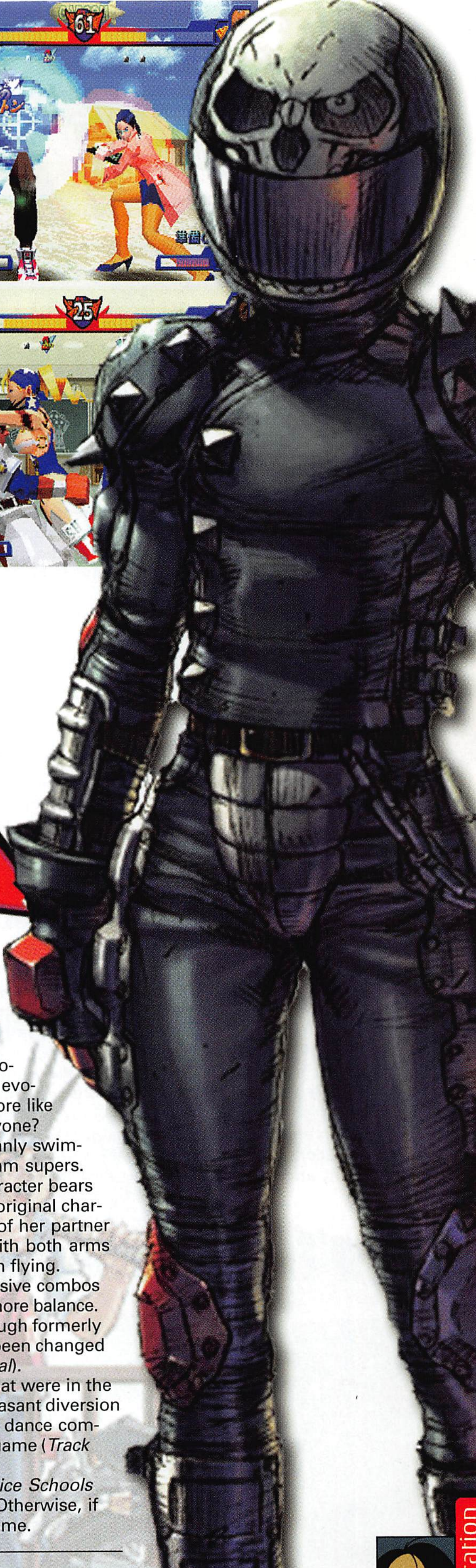
Marketing Guy #2: We gotta make it simple, since we're shootin' for mass appeal here. Every character's moves will be executed with a fireball, uppercut, or down-down motion. Throw in a bunch of flashy moves, lights, and an anger meter... for a button-mashing climax.
Marketing Guy #1: Yeah, yeah! What about playtesting?
Marketing Guy #2: Screw that! We've got schoolgirls! <toasting wine glasses>

Trust me on this, stay far, far away from this game. Even if you see the chick-laden cover in the import rental store, don't be tempted. Don't let that sick curiosity get the better of you. *Asuka* is a game you can do without.

*Eggo hasn't found a "chick fighting game" yet that's worth buying.*

| R REVIEW | EGGO: SOME... GAMES... WERE... BORN... BAD! | DEVELOPER - FAMILY SOFT | 1-2 PLAYERS | VIEWPOINT SCORE : 62 |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | PUBLISHER - FAMILY SOFT | AVAILABLE NOW JAPAN | |





# 私立ジャスティス学園 Rival Schools 2 熱血青春日記2

If there's any company that makes fighting games I like, it's Capcom. While *Street Fighter* is the game of choice, I enjoyed *Justice Schools* (we called it *Rival Schools*) for what it was worth when it first came out. Though it wasn't the deepest fighting game out there, it had an unmistakable charm and was fun to play. Now there's a pseudo-sequel here called *Shiritsu Justice Gakuen Nekketsu Seisyun Nikki 2,* which is the second evolution disc. First of all, this isn't a full-fledged sequel to *Justice Schools.* Rather, it's more like an expansion pack that doesn't need the original to play — *Justice Schools Integral*, anyone?

The primary draw of this game is the addition of two new characters: Nagare (a manly swimmer) and Ran (a female photographer). Both of whom have some jaw-dropping team supers. Nagare has a synchronized swimming super which is off-the-scale fruity, and his character bears an unhealthy resemblance to Rikuo from *Darkstalkers*. Ran, on the other hand, is an original character, and her team super is probably the funniest in the game — she takes photos of her partner with the enemy in all sorts of awkward poses. The final pose has that opponent with both arms around Ran and her partner's shoulders, then they kick him in the shins and send him flying.

Only hard-core fans of *RS* will appreciate the more subtle changes to the game. Abusive combos have been taken out, and new combos have been put in. These tweaks give the game more balance.

Visually, it's exactly the same as the original, with no graphical enhancements. Although formerly hidden characters are now selectable from the start, and some of the costumes have been changed (talk about cosmetic 'improvements,' this is really becoming a *Justice Schools Integral*).

There are also two completely new mini-games, in addition to all the mini-games that were in the original *Justice Schools*. Most of the mini-games are worth playing; plus they're a pleasant diversion when you want to try something new. One of the new mini-games on this disc is a dance competition which looks like *Bust-A-Move* but plays like *Parappa*. The other is a sprinting game (*Track & Field 2000*? Not quite.), which isn't half as entertaining as the dancing.

While I believe this game is worth a purchase, people who own the original *Justice Schools* shouldn't venture any more money here unless they really liked the original a lot. Otherwise, if you have a choice of *JS1* or *JS2*, pick up the latter if you want to try a fun fighting game.

*To this day, Eggo is trying his best to forget about high school. <shiver>*

| | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| VIEWPOINT SCORE :82 | DEVELOPER - CAPCOM | 1-8 PLAYERS | EGGO: GOIN' | R REVIEW |
| | PUBLISHER - CAPCOM | AVAILABLE NOW JAPAN | BACK TO SCHOOL... | |



TACTICAL ESPIONAGE ACTION

# METAL GEAR® SOLID

## I N T E G R A L

When *Metal Gear Solid* was released in the U.S. last year, it was the cream of the crop for PlayStation titles. In fact, it was too good; the U.S. version of *Metal Gear Solid* was even better than the Japanese. So in a show of one-ups-manship, Konami has released *MGSI* in Japan — which is the American game with a few extras. But no matter which way you spin it, games like *FF International*, *Tenchu Shinobi Gaisen*, and *Metal Gear Solid Integral* are just cash runs.

With almost no development time, a company can add a few features to entice the would-be buyer, slap a fancy "bigger, better" sticker on the box, and voila! A new *Metal Gear* for the unsuspecting public! But don't be fooled by the shiny, red sticker. *MGSI* is still the same game which you played and beat last year.

Here's the "new stuff" that Konami's added to *MGSI*. The American voice acting, difficulty level select, and extras (like Tuxedo Snake) are in, as well as Pocket Station support. These features mean nothing to us, but they sweeten the deal for Japanese gamers.

An extra third disc has been added, which holds 300 VR missions. This is the sparkling gem which gleams, oh so prettily, when you pick up the box and consider buying it. However, don't be fooled by the tantalizing mysteries of the third disc; the unfortunate truth is that most of the extra VR missions are boring. The new Weapon Mode missions train you in the use of weapons you should already be proficient in; since I'm assuming everyone's finished the original *Metal Gear Solid* already.

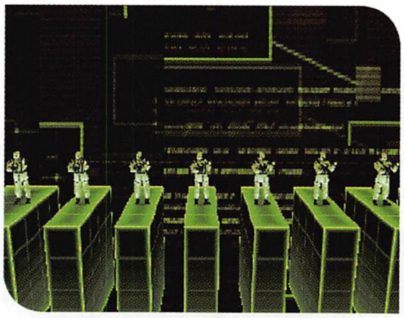
There are some enjoyable VR missions tucked away in that stack of 300. Especially noteworthy is the Mystery Mode, in which you play Detective Snake. Begin the mission and there's a dead guard on the ground, lying in a pool of blood. Search the nearby surroundings for a clue to his murder, then pick out the suspect from a lineup of three guards. In one example, you'll find a broken camera on the ground, with its mounted harness right above the victim. Check the three suspects, and you'll notice that one of them has a bump on his head. After a little deductive reasoning, put the suspect in a sleeper hold, and drag him to the arrest point. There are also three VR missions which let you control Cyber Ninja on a single background. Yes, he can cut worthless objects with his sword and deflect bullets as well, but the novelty wears off after 10 minutes.

Konami's planning on bringing this game over here. And when they do, sometime later this year, I can only recommend buying it for the people who never played the original *Metal Gear Solid*. It's still a great game, nearly flawless in every aspect and novel in game design. If *MGS* is new to you, this game would score a 100. But only the super hard-core *MGS* fans should check this one out, and even they should rent it first. E

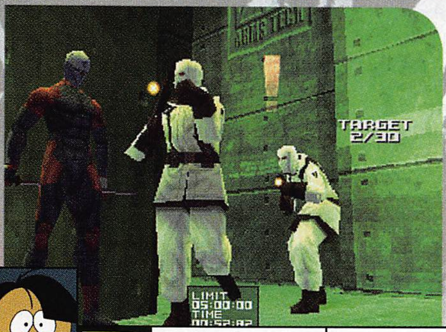


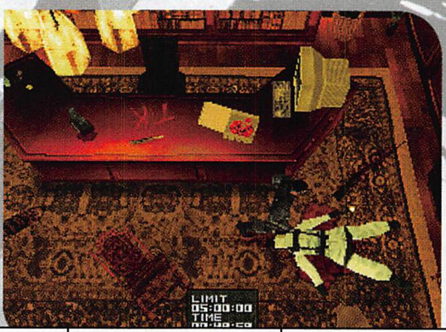


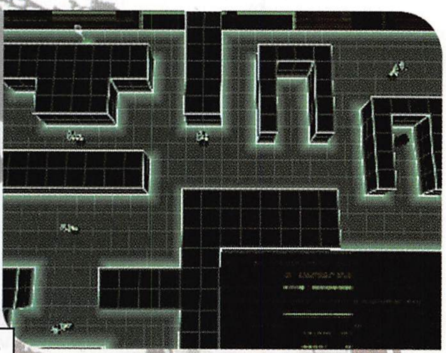




## Don't be fooled by this snake in the grass...



| | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| R REVIEW | EGGO: DIAMOND DAVE IS BACK! | DEVELOPER - KONAMI<br>PUBLISHER - KONAMI | 1 PLAYER<br>AVAILABLE NOW JAPAN | VIEWPOINT SCORE • 72 |

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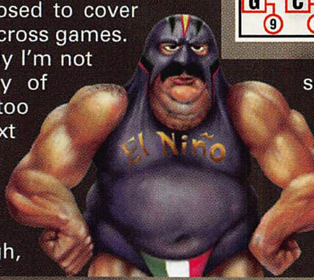
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# GameFan Sports

I still think soccer sucks, but I must admit that watching the finals of women's World Cup was pretty cool. There is something about women's sports which is refreshing. Like in tennis, where I much prefer to watch the ladies (and no, it has nothing to do with Martina or Anna's sweet, sweet candy), women's soccer can be so much more exciting than men's games. The matches seem to be played with so much more intensity and, without all of the huge contracts, mass exposure and court dates which dominate the male sports scene, you get to watch a more pure athletic competition. Not to mention the novelty of chicks bangin' around on a field has yet to lose its appeal (I won't even start on the pleasure I gain from watching women's boxing...). As cool as women's sports are, though, I would never buy a video game based on one.

This month I was supposed to cover some super bike and motocross games. I didn't, sorry. Quite frankly I'm not all that jazzed about any of them and most are still too early to bother with. Next month I will have some more recent playables, so maybe then I will put them in. The Man only gives me six pages a month, though,



so I have to be stingy. And I would hope all of you would agree that *NBA ShootOut* or *NHL 2000* coverage is a tad more important...

Notice the two FOX titles in this month's sports. Watch these guys because they are serious and their new games are good. Forget the dismal games of FOX past (college hoops and *ID4* could scare the stripes off a tiger); these guys have some good product and their own sports networks to market them on. 989 and EA should be very wary. —*El Niño*



This game will undoubtedly sell a bundle of copies, as did its predecessor. None-the-less it is clear that *Xtreme* has run its course and it is time for 989 to walk away while it can. Not only is it an inferior product to *Blitz*, but this whole genre is going stale...fast. Get your kicks with this version and then move on.

G 8 C 8 P 7 M 6 O 5 **82**



**NFL Xtreme 2**
**PlayStation**
**989 Studios**



What is our favorite dango doing here? Easy... to inform all that *NFL Xtreme 2* is not worth the money when you have *Blitz* on the same shelf. The gameplay remains the same to *Blitz* (passing in *Blitz* is better), but when you put both side by side, *Xtreme* can't compare.

G 7 C 7 P 6 M 7 O 5 **73**



Camelot knows what makes a great game. They stunned PlayStation audiences with *Hot Shots* and now they have delivered the same gaming perfection to the N64. This may be the best Nintendo game of the year... definitely the most addictive. All Nintendo owners will want to own this title. Now if I could just get the ball through that damn ring...

G 9 C 9 P 10 M 6 O 7 **95**




**Mario Golf**
**Nintendo 64**
**Nintendo**



Golf on the N64 with Nintendo characters... while the game could've sold bazillions on that concept, the big "N" got Camelot, the wizards behind *Hot Shots Golf*, to develop the game. The result? Definitely one of the best golf games ever and certain a must buy for all N64 fans.

G 8 C 9 P 9 M 7 O 7 **91**

# NFL Quarterback Club 2000

NINTENDO 64 | **P** Preview | Developer: Iguana | Publisher: Acclaim | Available: Now | # of Players: 1-4

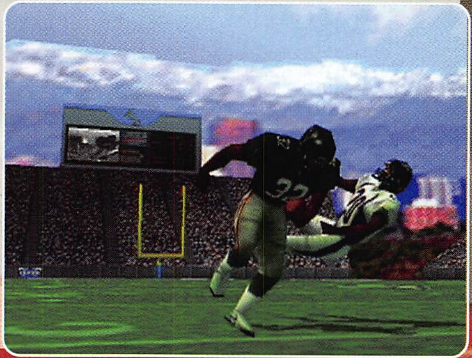
Even though there is plenty of elbow room on the N64 for the system's only two football franchises, the competition is no less intense than the war that rages on, on the PlayStation. Acclaim, which made the right decision to get out of the PlayStation football scene, where they were getting pummeled, has dug in deep on the N64. With Iguana, one of the industry's most talented teams, working on it, *QB Club* has become a viable football franchise.

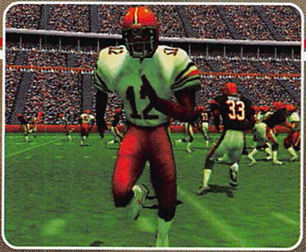
Viable or not, *QB Club '99* still couldn't beat out *Madden 99* for the best football game on the system last year. Without a doubt it was a better looking game, but the fact remains it didn't play as well as EA's opus. Iguana is hard at work again, tweaking the title so that it will not only look amazing, but have the kind of gameplay that will engross football fans.

Added will be a heightened AI system, pinpoint Passing (their version of Icon passing), and chocolatey goodness. O.K., so there is no chocolatey goodness, but there are new player models and over 1200 new motion captures.

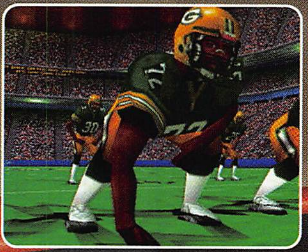
While Iguana gets no points for originality, they at least get props for putting in a feature that allows you to create your own players and custom build your own teams. This will be very good for those of you who want to construct dream teams to go head-to-head with your buddies. My team will feature Genghis Khan as a running back — 'cause he has that eye of the tiger — and Zeus as QB — 'cause he has good instincts and can really see the field. Ben Franklin will coach...

Look in next month's GameFan Sports section for a full review. **EN**









# NFL Extreme 2












PlayStation

**Developer: 989 Studios** **Available: Fall**
**Publisher: 989 Studios** **# of Players: 1-8**

**R Review**

The kinetic play of the arcade sports title is addictive, to say the least. While the lineage dates further back, it wasn't until *NBA Jam* came on the scene that this genre turned into the major money-maker. Since then there have been dozens of button-pounding titles, from *NBA Showtime* and *NHL Open Ice*, to the more recent *Blitz 2000* and *Xtreme 2*.

*NFL Xtreme*, 989's answer to the much ballyhooed *NFL Blitz*, managed to capture a good portion of the latter's audience with last year's inaugural title, but will be hard pressed to match the success this year. The fact of the matter is that this genre has begun to run out of steam, and the first franchises to take it on the chin will be the wanna-bes, like *Xtreme*.

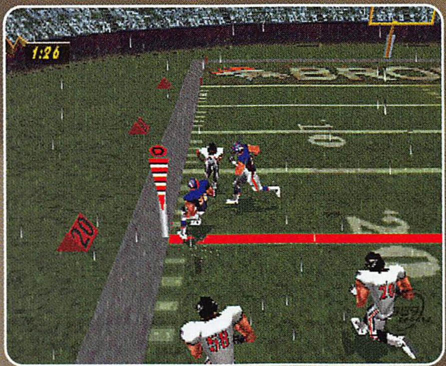
**"...this genre has begun to run out of steam..."**

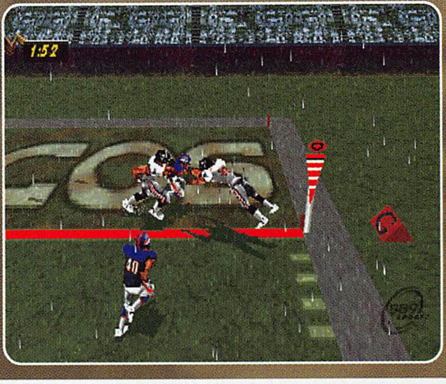
While there is much to be impressed with in *Xtreme 2*, there is also much to be disappointed in. This game looks great and blazes, thanks to a beefy engine. The poly counts on the players are high, the motion capture is good and the frame rate and speed are excellent. Even the control is responsive, which is of paramount importance given the speed of the action. Unfortunately, none of this makes up for the fact that it has little in the way of gameplay.

The shallow gameplay can be attributed to the fact that *Xtreme 2* is a match-up of 5-on-5. With this few players on the field (two less, per team, than *Blitz*), the level of difficulty and strategy are greatly reduced. It really doesn't matter what play you pick, the offensive-mindedness of the game and the lack of players make just about every throw a good throw and every run a good run; some reciever will be open; a hole will present itself to the running back.

All of the visceral extras that are showcased in *Xtreme* are fun to watch. You can throw players, put them in sleeper holds, and give them atomic drops. Always good for a laugh, at first, these additions lose their novelty quite quickly — much like fighting in hockey sims. None of them have any bearing on play, so what is the point? The oomph will eventually lose its... well, oomph.

*NFL Xtreme 2* will entertain some of the younger players who don't mind the repetitiveness of the play. But, otherwise, this isn't worth the purchase. *Blitz*, too, is running out of steam, but its deeper, more enjoyable, gameplay should give it legs enough to make it through one or two more seasons. *Xtreme* should hang up the cleats before it is too late... **EN**





# Mario Golf 64

NINTENDO 64

**Developer: Camelot**
**Publisher: Nintendo**

**Available: Now**
**# of Players: 1-4**

**R Review**

If there's one thing the hard-core gamer hates, it's sports games. Oh sure, maybe one or two of you are big fans of *Worldwide* or *ISS* soccer (which may explain why there are **so** many on console), but for the most part, we'd sooner play 'Dress Up With Barbie' than lay down some coin for *John Madden Super Turbo Deluxe '99* (at least Barbie looks good, right guys? Right?!). But something wonderful happened a mere two weeks ago — Camelot Software Planning's *Mario Golf 64* arrived, and I've had a mild epiphany and a slight adjustment in my never-give-a-sports-game-a-chance stance. See, this game **is** Camelot's prior PS mega-hit, *Hot Shots Golf*, only this time it's staffed by Mario and his motley crew.

There isn't much that needs to be said about *MG64*. It's golf. However, there's just something about it that screams to be played over and over and over again. At first I figured it was the grim determination to simply unlock all the hidden characters in the game — scratch that, I'm still going. Then I figured it must be the insane multi-player matches that would break out in the office on a moment's notice... nope, wrong again since I still play it alone. I guess it's simply that the game is fabulously addicting in the *Tetris* sense. Nobody exactly knows why something as simple as allowing a bunch of geometric shapes to fall into a well is so intoxicating, but *MG64* is the only sports game in recent memory to have the same 'forsake your friends, job, girlfriend (yeah right, who are we fooling?)'-style addiction.

**It's a cold day in Hell...**

Graphically, this game is a step-up from the previous PS edition. Instead of rendered sprite golfers pasted on fully 3D backgrounds, Camelot took an extra step and built the bunch out of polys so that everything has a nice seamless look, with none of the pain typically involved with 2D objects slapped onto 3D backgrounds. Overall the game appears to have taken a minor hit in the resolution dept., but any complaints can be mailed to 'I Don't Care' c/o this magazine.

So all you non-sports gamers (just about everybody reading this) can run out to your nearest software retailer and indulge in a nice few weeks on the links without the annoying sunburn and golf ball urchins trying to sell you your balls after you've hit them into the rough. Now if only Camelot would include a 3D golf cart sequence in their next rev... something along the lines of *Road Rash* would be nice. **ECM**





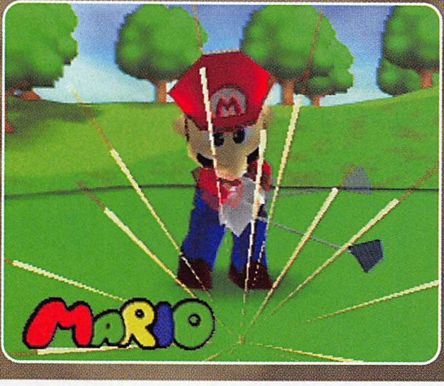












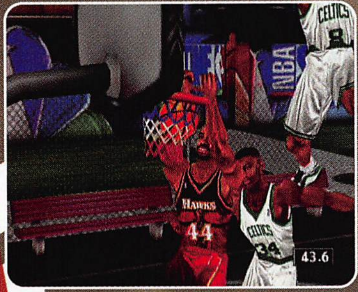

# NBA Showtime

*"Badger... for three!"*











**Dreamcast**

**Developer: Midway**
**Publisher: Midway**
**Available: Fall**
**# of Players: 1-4**

**P**
**Preview**

One of the great productivity killers of the GameFan offices is the *NBA Showtime* arcade machine. Not that I'd know anything about that, anymore, now that ECM has decried that if I'm seen playing the machine, the hard drive goes bye-bye. See what happens when you give people with Angry Dwarf Syndrome a little power: right to their head, Napoleon-style. It is a classic case of The Man keeping the peeps down.

Win one for the oppressed game editors (we are a toiling lot)! Midway's button pounding, arcade frenzy is now coming to the Dreamcast. What does this mean? Well, for one, it means I get to play it, over and over again, all in the name of preview work. For you, the gamer, it means you get to play a great coin-op without spending your weight in quarters.

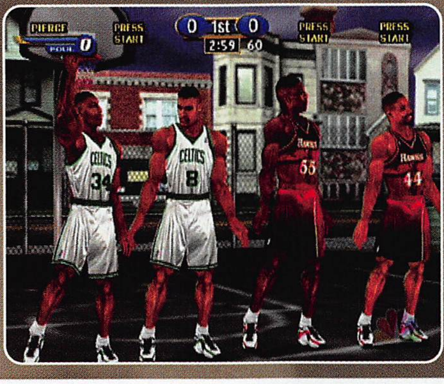
ECM insists that it is an exact port of the arcade title and that it is not necessary for me to play on, but I think I need to play a few more times- just to make sure; as the sports editor it is my sworn duty to be thorough. Alas, ECM was correct. *NBA Showtime* is, in fact, a marvelous facsimile of the arcade hit. The graphics are identical; the commentary is identical; and my custom character, Badger, still rains down threes on Fury (the resident chump), in identical fashion. Ooh la la...

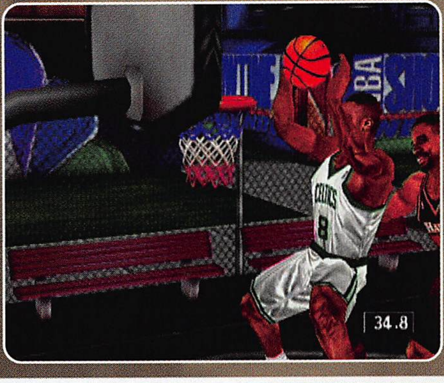
For those of you unfamiliar (shame on you!) with *Showtime*, it is nothing more than an *NBA Jam* for the 21st century. Crazy dunks, player "fire" and the ability to knock guys flat, *Arch Rivals* style, are all in here. Like the arcade version, you can create your own custom player and build him through the season (tournament). Win three games, earn 2 more points to allocate to his stats. It's all about the old man...

> **Please make the rubber-banding go away...**

Four player action remains the game's strongest area. While it is enjoyable to go head-to-head or against the computer, 4-player allows for the most harrowing action and gives the game a much higher replay value — not to mention smack-talking quotient. There is nothing funnier than whooping another team and then taunting them for being SAG. I will make Fury cry...

It may be a preview, but it is clear that little will change. While developers have yet to put the final spit-polish on, it is clear that this game is every bit as enjoyable as the arcade version. *NBA Showtime* is button mashing mayhem at its best. **EN**





# NHL Championship 2000



PlayStation

**Developer:** Radical **Available:** September
**Publisher:** FOX Sports Int. **# of Players:** 1-8

**P Preview**

While I can say that the sports genre is generally glutted, there is always room for another hockey sim; ALWAYS. I have remained faithful to *NHL* for years, but my eyes still tend to wander. It may be a good cracker, that *NHL* series, but it's *still* just the same, old cracker.

FOX Sports, which stumbled on the scene last year with some less-than-stellar Gremlin titles (they sucked, o.k.; there I said it) and then faded into the background. Unusual for a division of such a gigantic corporation; especially when the corporation's primary focus is sports.

> **"NHL hockey with a little FOX attitude..."**

Retooling has been done and now FOX has some beefy titles, one of which is *NHL Championship 2000* (tentative title). Developed by Radical, the company responsible for the stellar *NHL Powerplay*, *Championship* is quite impressive. While only a few of the original *Powerplay* guys are left on the development team (the other members went on to form Black Box, who are developing the Dreamcast hockey title), the assembled talent exhibits the skill and knowledge to spin gold.

Don't expect to find any breakthrough features or revolutionary takes for this hockey sim. Everything that is featured in *Championship* shows up, in one form or another, in every other hockey game. The modes of play are the same; the user stats, coaching options and individual player moves are in here; there are 18 international squads added as well as commentary. Nothing up these sleeves.

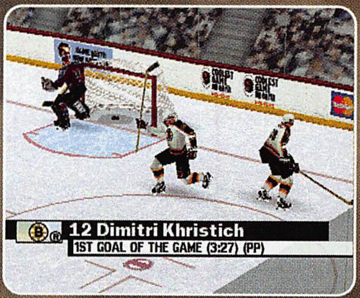
What *NHL Championship* does have, though, is some fantastic gameplay, great graphics and that unmistakable FOX flavor. The FOX announcers, John Davidson and Kenny Albert, do the play-by-play and color, respectively. All of the graphic lay-overs and sound effects (used in game presentation) are those you see on the FOX broadcasts. Thankfully, the puck shooting robots have been omitted... the puck glow and tail, however, have not. Cherry does not approve.

As mentioned previously, the gameplay is exceptional. The engine *Championship* is using is a good one. The control is tight, the graphics are sweet and the AI accurately depicts each team's style of play. What has yet to be fixed is the game's sluggish speed. Even on All-Star, it isn't running nearly as fast as *NHL* or *FaceOff*; this could become a huge problem, if not fixed. Without the sense of speed, you don't have a hockey game.

Radical and FOX have a potential hit with *NHL Championship 2000*. If they fix the speed and remember to cater to the hockey enthusiast, they will be alright. Otherwise, I'll be sticking with the same old cracker. **EN**





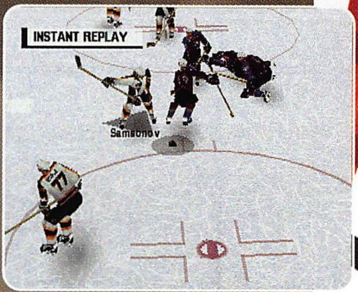




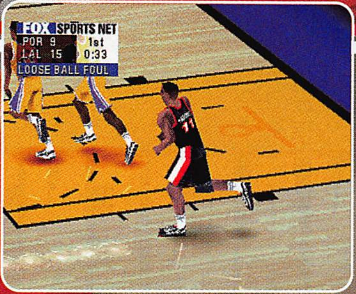








# NBA Championship 2000



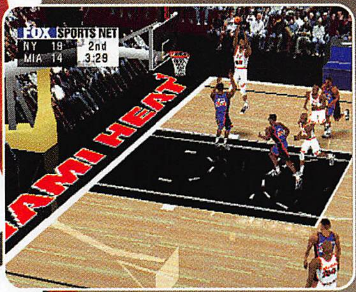













PlayStation

**Developer: Radical** **Available: October**
**Publisher: FOX Sports Int.** **# of Players: 1-4**

**P Preview**

The teaming of FOX and Radical looks to be a good one. *NBA Basketball 2000* (tentative title), the second solid sports title from the duo this fall, should have the meddle to put a stain on both *ShootOut* and *Live*'s hold on the hoop sim market.

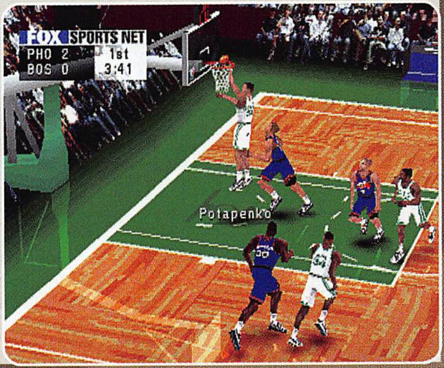
While FOX Sports will succeed, in major part, as a result of their ability to market (owning all your own networks has its perks), the hopes of creating a viable franchise will rest solely on this first game's quality. Forgotten is the debacle that was the N64 college hoops title. This is the here and now and now, *NBA Basketball 2000* looks good.

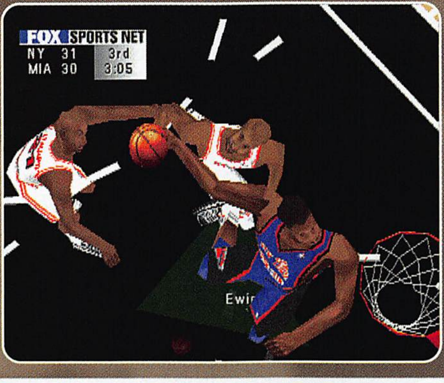
**"NBA basketball... FOX attitude..."**

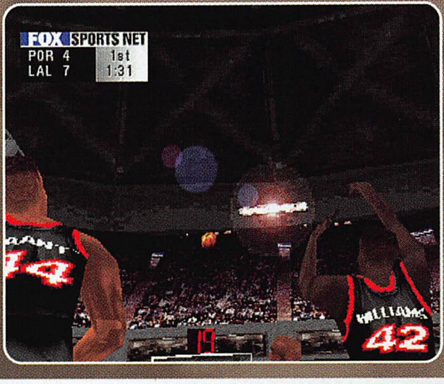
Better than good, actually; not only are the graphics and control good, but the addition of the FOX look and some innovative new wrinkles make this a solid contender. As with their hockey title, you won't see anything new, in the way of features or modes. All of the NBA teams, as well as the All-Stars and rookie All-Stars are present; player faces are included; and most of the moves are motioned captured, from fade-aways and alley-oops to tomahawk dunks and behind the back passes. FOX "attitude" is supplied by Doc Rivers and Greg Papa, and many of the FOX Sports trademark features, like the ticker and the FOX-Scope Replay, are included. It should bring a pretty good facsimile of the real thing to your PlayStation.

Some of the innovations I speak of make for much more interesting (and less annoying) gameplay. For starters, balls will come off the rim with an X on the ground, where they will land. This makes for much easier rebounding — something sorely missing from other titles. Also included is a new double-tap free throw shot meter. This new system works much like a golf swing meter and makes for some challenging trips to the stripe.

The game still has some problems to be worked out, like a laggy replay feature, some broken commentary and some AI glitches. Radical assures us that they will all be fixed, though, so we can breathe easy. *NBA Basketball 2000* should rate as more than a dark horse, except for the fact that it is the new kid on the block. Maybe they could get Jim Brown to plug it on *America's Funniest*... **EN**



# Quarter Crunchers

*It's not a summer in arcades without a new Namco fighter!*

# Tekken Tag Tournament

Namco isn't known for going with the flow. Some of Namco's most successful games have redefined the way we play games today: *Pole Position, Galaga, Ridge Racer, Tekken* — all solid examples of Namco's ingenuity. *Tekken* has been one of my favorites (I have a lot of these don't I?) since the first time I played it. *Tekken 2* was an even better game with more characters, better graphics, and larger combos. I loved *T2* in arcades and was so amped about the PlayStation conversion that I picked it up on the first day of its Japanese release. *Tekken 3* improved gameplay tenfold with "smart" side-stepping and a load of new fighters. Namco's not ready to give us *Tekken 4*, but we do have *Tekken Tag Tournament* to tide us over.













I guess if Capcom can borrow the tag team idea from SNK, Namco can do the same. *Tekken Tag Tournament* takes characters from *Tekken, Tekken 2,* and *Tekken 3* and adds more moves, game balance, and the new Tag feature. Located to the right of the Right Punch or Right Kick button is the Tag button. Like the Capcom versus series, switching out gives one character a rest as the other enters the fray. The coolest thing about the switch has to be the option to Tag out and simultaneously launch your opponent. For instance, Jin's Tooth Fairy attack is performed by side-stepping then pressing Right Punch; pressing the Tag button immediately after connecting with the Tooth Fairy will cause Jin to dash out and his team member to rush in. Jin's cohort then has more than enough time to commence a juggle combo — nice touch, wouldn't you say?















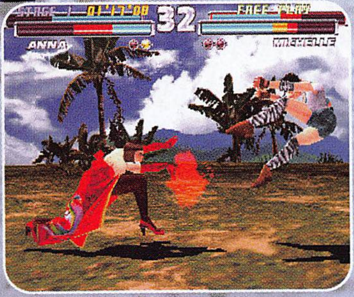

Tagging isn't only for showboat combos; it serves the same purpose as it does in Capcom's *Vs.* series. A fighter that is on the sidelines is resting. When at rest, a fighter regains his or her stamina. I've illustrated one of the three primary ways a fighter can join the battle. The other two ways are by performing a Tag team throw (Left Punch, Right Punch, and Tag) or by simply pressing the Tag button. The latter method can be risky, as a fighter entering the ring is susceptible to attack. Odd how just another button can change gameplay so significantly.

Each existing fighter has learned a half-dozen or so new moves, from Heihachi's new Dark Thrust to Yoshimitsu's Shrine. These same fighters have been modified for the sake of better gameplay. Yoshimitsu's mid-kick isn't as cheap as it once was, for example. Damage levels have been toned down on some moves and characters, but problems abound with returning fighters like Ganryu.





Initially, 20 fighters will be playable; they include Baek Doo San, Michelle Chan, Gun Jack, Anna Williams, Bryan Fury, Heihachi Mishima, Ganryu, Julia Chan, Jun Kazama, Ling Xiaoyu, Yoshimitsu, Nina Williams, Forest Law, Hwoarang, Eddie Gordo, Paul Phoenix, King, Lei Wulong, and Jin Kazama. That's a large roster as it stands, and expect at least another dozen to appear through time release. Missing from *Tekken 2* are Kazuya, Devil Kazuya, Marshal Law, Bruce Irvin, Wang, Lee Chaolin, Alex, Roger, and Kuma. Only Mokujin, Ogre, and True Ogre are missing from *Tekken 3*. Funny, I've mentioned 12 characters — there are 12 unknown fighters, but who knows what Namco has cooked up. We might see some new faces before the millennium rears its ugly head. And if we don't see any new characters you can bet we'll be seeing a lot of old ones. A complete cast means that you can combine characters depending on their relationships.






I know some players will complain that besides some visual enhancements, the game looks almost the same. Scenery has been redone and looks great; each character gets new garb, but it's not a significant step in the optical department. I'm not complaining, as this isn't a true sequel. How many times have other publishers done up a sequel with the same graphical libraries? Rest assured that *Tekken 4* will be a large jump, but accept *Tekken Tag Tournament* for what it is, a very fun-to-play upgrade.

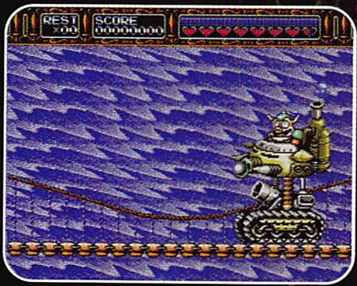
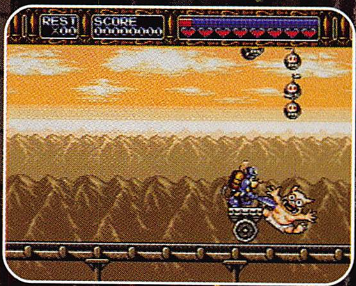
Already jammin', the tuneage is completely different than before. In-game audio tracks are better than ever and as clear as a spinning CD. I think I'll be getting the *Tag Tournament* soundtrack ASAP. For 50 cents a pop you really can't go wrong trying *Tekken Tag Tournament*. It's not a summer in arcades without a new Namco fighter, and this is it. Practice up because Namco plans to have some kick ass tournaments. **Cerberus**






# THE GRAVEYARD

# ROCKET KNIGHT ADVENTURES


What defines a console? It certainly isn't the hardware. No, it's probably something more akin to the games (at least I thought it used to be, but all this PS2 nonsense... <sigh>). A closer look would probably reveal that most consoles were defined by genres — not just individual titles. For instance, if you wanted to play RPGs, the SNES was the place to be in the 16-bit days; the PS in the 32-bit age (**only** because the Saturn died of unfortunate complications). If you were going to characterize the Genesis' existence, it would more than likely focus around character-driven action games and shooters — **lots** of shooters. However, this month we'll be focusing firmly on the former, with a title that many of you have probably forgotten (heck, it even slipped my mind): Konami's platforming tour-de-force, *Rocket Knight Adventures*.

When 3rd parties began fleeing the iron-fisted rule of Nintendo in the first half of the 16-bit age, they brought with them both their hottest refugees (in Konami's case, the *Ninja Turtles*, *Castlevania*, and *Contra*... ah, the good ol' days) as well as stunning up-and-comers clearly created to cater towards the Genesis' "Blast Processing" powerhouse. *Rocket Knight Adventures*, starring Sparkster the possum, was one such amazingly crafted original creation.

Realizing that Sonic, and Sonic alone, was nearly responsible for the Genesis' meteoric, Nintendo-smashing rise to power, Konami figured, "Hey, we can do this too," and a legend was born; a legend that, needless to say, was lost after only one sequel apiece on Genesis and SNES (a sequel that failed to do the original justice, I might add).

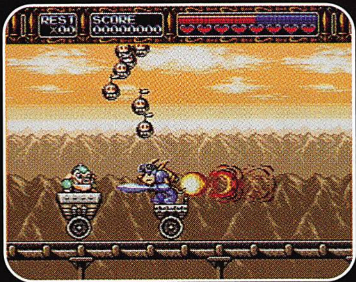
Sparkster was a sword-wielding, rocket-boosting rodent (actually, I suppose he was a marsupial) that probably could have been a distant cousin to Sonic. Traversing a multitude of horizontally and vertically scrolling levels replete with power-ups (fruit for health, crystals for points), parallax, and plenty of prodigious play, this game has aged amazingly well in the six years since its debut. In fact, it ate up a considerable amount of my time this month as a very vicious deadline crept ever nearer... so close, in fact, that this issue will barely make our ever-important print date (oops...).

While gamers had been subjected to a veritable flood of platforming titles (as noted in the *Blue Stinger* preview, far be it for this industry, yada, yada, yada...), Sparkster actually stood apart from his anthropomor-

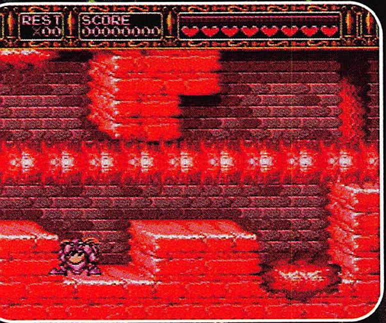
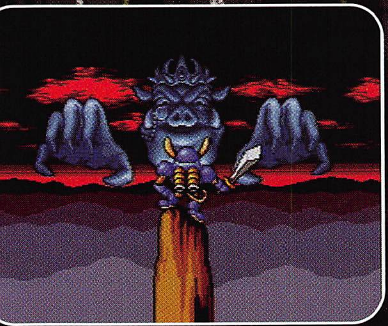
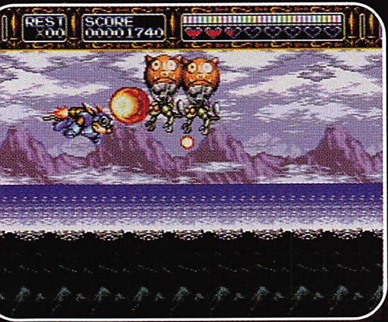










phic cousins. This was mainly due in part to the fact that Sparkster's 'gimmick' (the rocket pack strapped to his back) hadn't been run into the ground — can't say the same for cute, wise-alecky critters that raced through games faster than a speeding hedgehog (who else remembers *Socket*?).

The story line in *RKA* pits the virtuous hero Sparkster of the possum people, against the nefarious porcine menace determined to wipe all pouched-kind from the face of the earth. Sparkster's mission is to (try not to wince) save the possum princess and turn all the pork bellies he meets into so much bacon. This is all accomplished through some amazingly solid play mechanics.

Instead of the standard 'hop on their head till they're dead' mechanic, Sparkster employs a handy little pig-sticker that fires hoops of energy capable of stopping any pugnacious opponent dead in his tracks. More importantly though, is Sparkster's take on Sonic's spin-dash attack: by charging up his handy-dandy rocket pack and letting loose, Sparkster can cut a swath of death across the screen leaving all pig-kind dead in his tracks.

Well, not entirely 'dead.' See, the developers of *RKA* made a conscious effort to make this game as non-violent as possible. Instead of turning your portly foes into slabs of pork ribs with each 'kill,' they'd simply lose their clothes and run wailing off the screen like a bunch of little girls that lost their dollies. It's amusing to watch, and kinda makes ya wonder why it is that every time a reasonably cute character bites it, they go out in some sort of fruity, flowery, Shidoshi-like way (check out *Tarzan*, and its butterfly death-cloud for the furthest realization of this notion).



***"...this game has aged amazingly well in the six years since its debut. In fact, it ate up a considerable amount of my time this month..."***

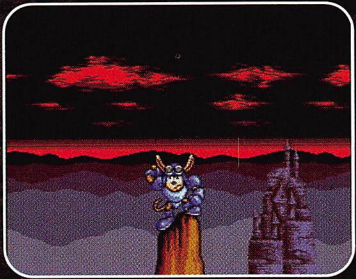


Perhaps the nicest aspect of *RKA* was the simple fact that it proved Konami could make it without the talented chaps over at Treasure (members of which created games like *Axelay* and *Contra 3* on SNES, among others). Large bosses (some featuring a decent amount of multi-joined animation — something which would later be used quite extensively in *Contra Hard Corps* and *Castlevania: Bloodlines*.

Graphically, *RKA* was a solid platform game back in the day, with stunning animation and a very nice color palette that Konami worked from with deft skill (the sickeningly limited color palette being the largest design flaw in the Genesis). As was the order of the day, there was layer upon layer of beautiful parallax, something that has gone the way of the arcade game in recent years, i.e. it's still around but you really have to look hard to find any good examples.

Amazingly, the music is actually good enough to get the blood pumping, even in this day of "CD quality sound." In fact, I'm probably of the opinion that musicians **had** to be better back then, simply because they didn't have the crutch of megabytes of uncompressed music to work with (though there still are some examples of stunning, PCM music — *Final Fantasy Tactics* or *Astal*, anyone?).

As it stands, *RKA* may be one of the more forgotten Genesis platformers (I'm not sure why, though) but it's certainly one of the best. Too bad the magic didn't carry over to the Genesis **and** SNES sequel, *Sparkster* (uninspired at best). Maybe if we're really lucky, Konami may find it in their hearts to grant us another chapter, helmed by the original team. Of course, we'd have to be talkin' full 3D, 'cause: "Nobody likes 2D anymore" — anonymous game developer at a major publisher... who shall remain nameless for his own protection. **ECM**





Priss, from BGC 2040

The night belongs to the Sabers once again ...

# neo AnimeFan

Anime, Manga, Asian Live-Action, J-pop, Culture, and all related product

It's been rather strange times for me lately. About a week and a half ago, we had to put Baby, a cat that I've had for fifteen years, to sleep. Doing that really had an effect on me - it was the right thing to do in that situation, I have no doubt of that at all, but it's still a hard thing to come to terms with. Since then, I've spent a lot of time thinking about things, evaluating my life, who I am, which parts of my life really matter to me and which honestly don't. Sometimes, in the lives that we lead, we never really take the time to get a go look at exactly where we are at and what is goi on around you - it's takes an event such as th before you realize how quickly things are going without your really noticing them all. I know sound like a complete freak here who is trying be "deep" or something, but I guess I'm just sa ing that everyone should take a moment or two look at their lives and appreciate the importa things that are meaningful to you. ***- shidoshi***

## Goods Showcase

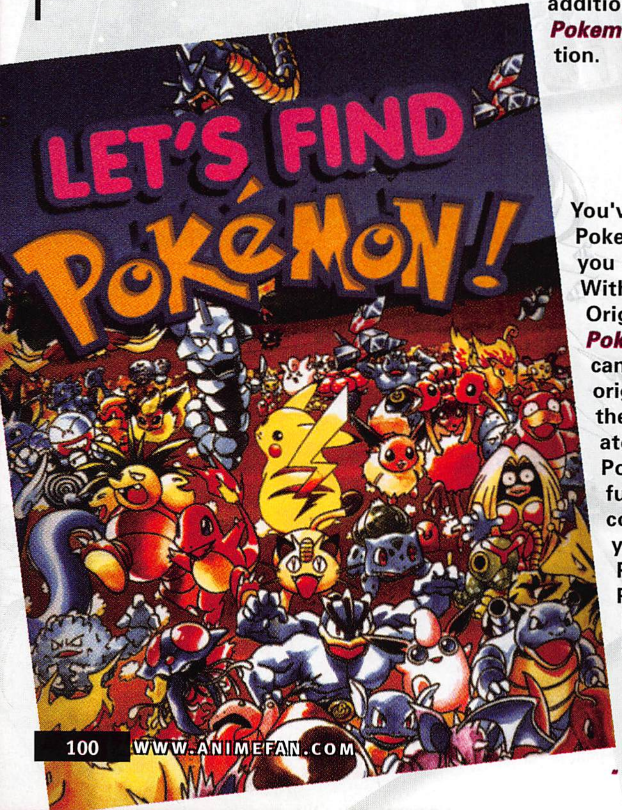
## Pokemon Products

Like 'em or loath 'em, those cute little creatures from the ***Pokemon*** world have taken the US by storm, and there seems to be no end in sight. Knowing how hot their property is, Viz is set to release a number of new ***Pokemon*** products this September for eager fans to snatch up. As always, AnimeFan is here to give you the run-down on what is what and what you can look forward to in the world of Pokemania.




### Pokemon Tales >

The first new line of ***Pokemon*** products are the "Pokemon Tales," pocket-sized books which each feature a different Pokemon creature. Printed on durable board paper stock, these books are perfect for all of the younger ***Pokemon*** fans out there, but will also be a treat for older fanatics as well. Each story is accompanied by beautiful illustrations, done in a unique style by a different artist for each book. Will you read about Pikachu and his exciting adventures, Charmander's telling his friends about the ghosts he saw, Squirtle trying to find the courage to come out of his shell, or Bulbasaur helping two children to solve their argument. For the mere price of $4.95, these little collectable books will be a great addition to any ***Pokemon*** fan's collection.



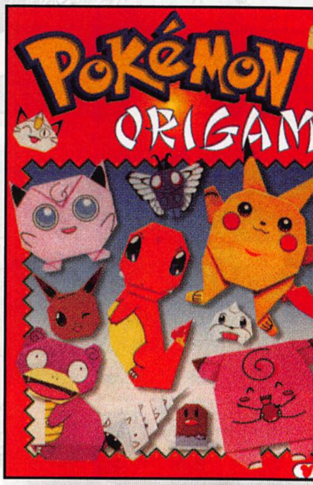

### > Pokemon Origami

You've caught Pokemon, not see if you can make them! With the Pokemon Origami book, any ***Pokemon*** master can now become an origami master as they craft and create their favorite Pokemon. This full-color book contains all of your favorite Pokemon - Pikachu, Bulbasaur, Squirtle, Eevee, and many more - all crafted in pre-printed paper. Fold and manipulate each page until you've got an entire ***Pokemon*** co lection that you've crafted with your own hands! This 80 pag book will retail for a suggested price of $8.95, and is a gre way for anyone to have fun and learn a new craft with the ca of ***Pokemon***.

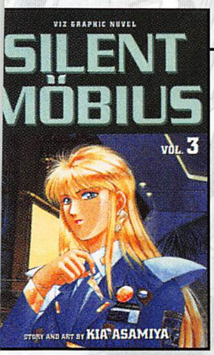
### < Let's Find Pokemon!

Forget Where's Waldo... where is Pikachu? In this 22-page book, you'll get a look into the daily life of ***Pokemon***, fro Pallet Town to the mysterious Mt. Moon - detailed artwo shows hundreds of Pokemon at work, play, and other activ ties. Each location gives readers a new challenge, and th additional activity pages provide even more fun and enjo ment.

Is that not enough for you? Well, don't forget about th GameBoy Color ***Pokemon Pinball*** and Nintendo 64 ***Pokemo Snap*** games from Nintendo, the ***Pokemon*** movie coming o this November in US theaters, the ***Pokemon*** VHS and DVD collections from Pioneer and Viz, the ***Pokemon*** manga - including an all-new "Pokemon Adventures" series from Viz, all of the ***Pokemon*** toys and stuffed dolls out there (I want me one of them big Pikachus), those greedy little virtual Pikachu thingies, the ***Pokemon*** card game from Wizards of the Coast, the ***Pokemon*** / Lunchables cross promotion, the Pokemon toys from Hasbro ... just to name a few. ***- shidoshi***




" Ready lke? Kick the baby... " " Don't kick the baby... "




## Silent Mobius

Action/Drama • Viz • 14+
246 pages • US Format • Graphic Novel

**B**

In the heart of the 21st century, strange demon-like creatures referred to as "Entities" started to plague the Earth. As normal police forces were unable to handle them, a new group called the "A.M.P." was formed with the specific task of taking on these Entities. Comprised of six women, each has a special talent - ranging from enhanced psychic abilities to superhuman rength - that helps them in doing the job that no one else can. Hard ressed (which, I guess I am), I might best describe ***Silent Mobius*** as sort of ***Ghostbusters*** set in the world of ***Blade Runner***. The A.M.P. ust hunt down the Entities that slip into the human world, and con-ain them in spirit shields until they can be dealt with properly.

volume three of the graphic novel release, we open ith a tale surrounding Lebia Maverick, the cyberneti-ally powered Visionaire. Lebia is on the trail of an elu-ve criminal whose goal is to completely take over the ntire computer system for Tokyo. Next we go outside he A.M.P. to watch as police officer Robert DeVice puts is life on the line trying to stop the flow of Dommel, a range drug that turns anyone who takes it into horrible onsters. Finally, the chief of the A.M.P., Rally heyenne, must deal with the monsters in her past - hich center around her younger sister, and the reason hat she helped form the A.M.P. in the first place. What rrible secrets lead to the arrival of the Entities, and the orming of the A.M.P., and what will the other members hink when they find out the truth?

***Silent Mobius*** is an engrossing manga title, if not a bit heavy at times: unless you're ready to give it your full attention, it may come off as a bit boring. As well, even though I've gone through three graphic novel volumes, the cast stills seems a bit one-dimensional to me. I would most recommend ***Silent Mobius*** to those out there who like the deep, rich sci-fi manga titles (especially those of you who love Shirow works such as ***Appleseed***) - if that's your kind of thing, you'll really dig this saga. If your idea of a good read is something like ***Ranma 1/2*** or ***Oh My Goddess!***, however, this one may be too much overload for you. ***- shidoshi***









## Call Me Princess: Issue 2

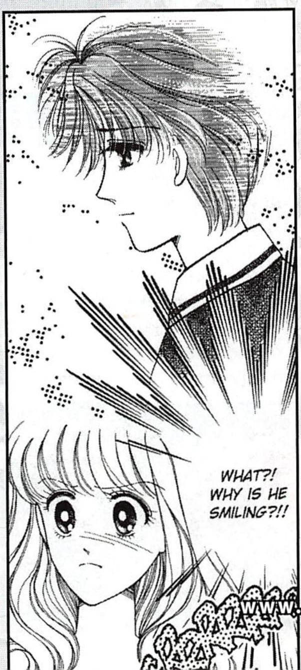
Shoujo • CPM Manga • 7+
32 pages • US Format • Monthly

**B-**

Makoto is an average schoolgirl who wants only one thing out of life - she wants to find a wonderful man who will treat her like a princess. Ever since her sister found such a man and had a wedding like those out of a fantasy story, Makoto has held the esire for the same deep in her heart. But her day-reams for finding such a guy may stay just that, as ll of the boys around her at school are nothing more than classless jerks. That is until one day when, while stuck up a tree, a handsome boy who eminds her of her brother-in-law helps her down. Will this new boy be the man of her dreams, or will strange turn of events come between Makoto and her desires?

can't say I'm too familiar with Tomoko Taniguchi's ther work, but I liked the first issue of ***Call Me Princess***, and I look forward to both future issues and anything else of hers that CPM Manga decides o give us. While her artwork and scenes won't worry the big names of the shoujo manga world anything soon, her art is stylish and has a certain harm to it. ***CMP*** is VERY shoujo - it's a heart-warming story about relationships and the dreams of young girls. Because of this, a lot of male fans who might pick up a copy will wonder with bemusement what the point is. But for the female readers out there - especially younger ones - who are sick of manga with nothing but guns, robots, and exposed girls, or for those of us who actually have the ability to appreciate and understand shoujo, you should hunt yourself down a copy to see what you think.

I don't care if I get ribbed for liking a "girlie" comic or not, I enjoyed ***Call Me Princess*** and think shoujo fans should at least give it a shot. The story and characters aren't anything ground-breaking, but then again it is still early in the story and who knows how the story will progress. As well, it's cause for celebration any-time a new title comes out in this genre of manga that is still sparse in the US. I'm glad to see more American companies giving shoujo manga a try, and I prey that it's a trend that will only grow as time goes on.
***- shidoshi***






AnimeFan rates each title reviews on a scale of A (excellent), B (good), C (average), D (poor), and F (horrible). Remember, a grade of C isn't bad, and only when a title starts getting into the D range should you start to consider avoiding it at all costs. For DVD titles, two scores are present, one for the anime itself, and the other for it's DVD presentation. The DVD grade covers everything from image quality to package to extras, so while a DVD may look beautiful, it could loose points for having no extras or other such issues.

### Guide to Ratings Codes

We'll use this example:
Sub | Dub
VHS | LD | DVD

Black: The title is available in that format / language. So, for our example, the title is out in both Sub and Dub on VHS.

Underlined: The version being reviewed. So, we're reviewing the VHS Sub version.

Greyed: Not available. So, our title isn't out on LD.

Red: Coming soon / planned. Our example title is planned for release on DVD.

Send comments, letters, artwork to:

**AnimeFan**
6301 DeSoto Avenue
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Woodland Hills, CA 91367

Or :
shidoshi@gamefan.com







## Bubblegum Crisis 2040

**AF Best of the Issue!**

Action • TV (3 eps) • ADV Films • 12+
90 min • Sub | Dub • VHS | LD | DVD
**A-**

There eternal cause for great arguments among anime fans - the remake. The idea of taking a hit anime title and remaking it is like throwing raw meat into a pit of rabid dogs when it comes to the fans. Will the fans accept the new interpretation of the title, or will they cry for blood over the bastardization of their beloved series? If any such classic anime could cause an uproar over the mention of a remake, it's most certainly ***Bubblegum Crisis***. Enter ***Bubblegum Crisis 2040***, the retelling of the saga of the Knight Sabers, updated and redesigned for a whole new generation of fans. As worried as I was going into ***BGC 2040***, I've got to say that most of my fears washed away as I watched. I was a bit sad to see that the "music" aspects of the show weren't a strong here as they were in the original ***BGC***. In the first three episodes, outside of the opening and closing themes, the only time we hear Priss sing is when she is rehearsing with her band, Sekiria. That's a shame, as music was a big part of the original, and the credit songs showed a nice bit of promise. The other aspect that didn't feel "right" was Leon - instead of the cool, sly type of guy he used to be, he's now a somewhat more boring "roughneck" type. The rest of the cast also went through quite an update process, but for them, things worked out far better. I love Priss' new design, Nene retains the cute and silly feel without looking TOO cutesy, Sylia looks elegant and refined as she should, and while I do miss the old Linna a bit, her new design really grew on me. Boosting the new designs are the English voice actors, who all do a wonderful job voicing the Knight Sabers - this is one of those dubs where I thought every voice fit the character perfectly. And, while it's not fair to directly compare the original ***BGC*** and ***BGC 2040*** in the terms of art quality, I think the hard-suits look FABULOUS in this style, especially Linna's (hers was always my favorite). If you go into ***Bubblegum Crisis 2040*** trying to compare it to the original series, you'll only be looking for disappointment. However, if you accept it's a remake and go into it without expectation, you might really be surprised by what you find. I know there will be people who will curse the creation of this remake until the day that they die, and that's fine, but I was extremely impressed by what I saw. Not only did it blow away all expectations that I had for it, but it's made me fall in love with the story of the Knight Sabers all over again. ***- shidoshi***

## Fushigi Yugi: Dark Reunion

Drama • TV (3 eps.) • Pioneer • 13+
75 min • Sub | Dub • VHS | LD | DVD
**B+**




Can it be? Has Miaka really found the seventh warrior of the Sh Seven? Now that it seems as if she has, there are two goals left to complete: let Tamahome know that it's time to return to Konan, and somehow get the "Book of the Four Gods" back from Nakago, part of the Seiryu Seven. But planning to do so and actually accomplishing it are two different things, and it seems that Yui isn't ready to give Tamahome up so easily. Will the life-long friendship between her and Miaka really come to an end so easily? If there's one testament to my liking of this series, it is this: I watched almost four hours of Fushigi Yugi straight (I was a bit behind on my watching), and when I finished the last episode that I had, I still wanted to watch more. To me, that's a good sign. Back when I first started into FY, I had a questionable opinion of it - it started off a bit odd, and there were some serious issues with badly drawn scenes. But as the series progressed, some of the minor hiccups seem to have been worked out, and while it's still TV-quality animation, it's much better than what it was at the start. The story, as well, got very good very quickly, and now is a wonderful mixture of complex plots and enjoyable characters (who are thankfully given enough character development to matter). As I said, even after watching nine episodes in a row, I can't wait to get the next volume and see what happens next. Fushigi Yugi has the emotion and character that many similar series are missing, and if it weren't lacking in the production value department (as even the best TV shows usually do), I would be hard-pressed to have any complaints. ***- shidoshi***







## Saber Marionette J Again

Action/Comedy • TV (2 eps) • Anime Village • 13+
54 min • Sub | Dub • VHS | LD | DVD
**B**

***Saber Marionette J*** was a show I never was looking forward to see - a show based around a collection of girls who screamed "created to attract the guy fans." However, I was actually quite surprised and pleased with what I found. Enter ***Saber Marionette J Again***, the second run of the SMJ TV series. Continuing the story, we now find Otaru in possession of three new girls - the Saber Dolls, Tiger, Luchs, and Panther. Slightly reformed, the three marionettes were sent to Otaru by their master, Faust, to learn how to be more "human." But unbeknownst to them, a seventh marionette is about to appear on the scene - Marine, a strange and mysterious marionette (and a real cutie). Something was bothering me about this show, and after a while, I realized what it was - the show has turned into ***Tenchi***. The feel, the mix of seriousness and comedy, the guy who seems to be collecting a household of strange women who all have feelings for him - it's all there. The switch from wacky comedy to slightly more serious character comedy, while not all bad, is sort of a shame. The bigger shame, though, is the wide use of scenes that were aided by computer effects. The effects range from the simple, such as computer created backgrounds or multi-level zooms, to fully computerized things such as the "bouncing house" (something you have to see to understand). Not only that, but the entire series has that sort of computer look, with lines that are jagged due to digitization instead of looking nice and smooth. I can understand computers help reduce the cost and amount of work, but I am still not cool with the idea, nor the look the series has because of it. The show is still worth checking out if you're a fan of ***Saber Marionette J***, I just wish they would have left things alone and kept them how they were before. ***- shidoshi***







# Record of Lodoss War

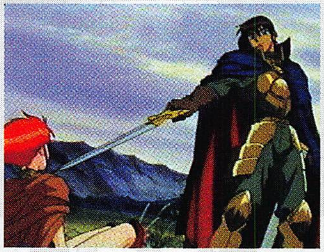
## Chronicles of the Heroic Knight

Adventure • TV (3 Eps) • US Mangs • 13+
90 min • Sub | Dub • VHS | LD | DVD

**B**

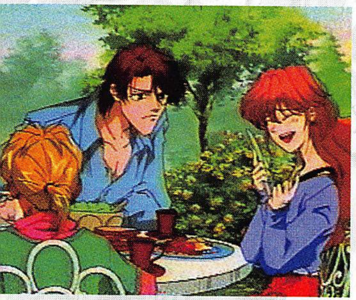
It's been five years since the War of the Heroes, and all seems to be fairly stable and peaceful in the land of Lodoss. However, in the shadows of the night, a familiar evil is about to make itself known again in a big way. Ashram, the Black Knight of Marmo, has returned, and is seeking out the legendary Scepter of Domination. Should he get his hands on it, all of Lodoss could be doomed. The free knight Parn and the elven warrior Deedlit, heroes of the previous war, are forced to once again take up arms to defend their homeland from certain doom. Anyone familiar with anime TV titles knows that they don't have huge budgets, so the artwork and animation isn't always as good as it could be. Now, in itself, ***Record of Lodoss War: Chronicles of the Heroic Knight*** isn't bad or anything, and only had a scene or two that looked rough. The problem is the intro: it's just SO awesome, so beautifully drawn and animated that the actual show can't even begin to compare. If they had had the production budget to make the entire show like the intro.. man oh man. That dream aside, ***CotHK*** seems to be off to a pretty decent start. The new characters, though slightly wacky in the character design sense, look like they'll gel well with the story, and he music continues in the tradition of "exquisite Lodoss music." The English voices did little to win me over (Parn's voice especially bugged me), so unless you will only watch dubs, I would highly recommend the sub. I think it's still too early to say if this series will be considered a classic or not - for now, everything seems good, and I'm eager to see how it develops over time. However, I never was hardcore into the original series, so ***Lodoss*** fans may go for this quicker than I might. Darn nice sleeve design, by the way. ***- shidoshi***









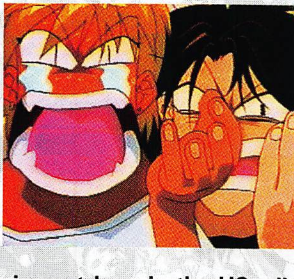


# Fake

Bishounen • OAV • AnimeWorks • 16+
60 min • Sub | Dub • VHS | LD | DVD

**C+**

Wanting a little rest and relaxation, detective Dee Laytner invites his partner, Randy McLane (whenever I hear his name mentioned, all I can think is Die Hard) to go on vacation with him to a quiet resort in England. Expecting a quiet, enjoyable time, soon after getting there the two detectives are shocked to find a body floating in the nearby lake. From there on out, their vacation becomes a twisted web of murder, deceit, and maybe even a little romance. My opinion of ***Fake*** was quite different between the first half and the second half of the show. At first, the story sort of just drags along, and it seems as if it can't decide if it wants to be a murder mystery or a character drama. Then, come about the midway point, the storyline picks back up and things start getting really interesting. One thing that didn't grow on me, however, were the character designs - everyone in the story is drawn a bit too angular and "chiseled" for my tastes. The English dub, as well, is slightly off - for the most part, it's not too bad, but at times it can really get on your nerves. Now, for a little warning: this show has quite a bit of homosexual overtones to it. While it certainly isn't what I would consider a hentai title, if you're not comfortable with non-heterosexual characters then this title certainly isn't for you. If anime is to become a genuine form of entertainment here in the US, all types and genres of anime need to come our way. ***Fake*** fills a category that is still lacking in English, so it's nice to see AnimeWorks give it a shot. ***- shidoshi***



# Fist of the North Star: Vol 4

Action • TV (3 eps) • Manga Ent. • 16+
75 min • Sub | Dub • VHS | LD | DVD

**C+**

The future is a hot, dry, evil place, teeming with rough punks who fight amongst each other for what is left of society. But amidst them walks Kenshiro, the last surviving member of the art of Hakuto Shinken. Known as the "Fist of the North Star" (due to the scars on his chest which look like the Big Dipper), Kenshiro wanders the earth looking for Julia, his fiance who was kidnapped by the ruthless warrior Shin. His fighting skills unmatched, Kenshiro finds himself helping out those in need, protecting the innocent from the scum who take advantage of them at any opportunity. Consistency is the word to use for ***Fist***,. There isn't a lot of difference between each episode - Kenshiro stumbles across a gang of Road Warrior-types beating up on some innocent people, and he is forced to make them understand the mistake that they made. If you've seen a few episodes of ***Fist***, and you liked what you saw, then chances are that you'll enjoy the entire series. However, if you saw a few and found no interest in them, well, I doubt later episodes will influence you otherwise. ***Fist***, just might not be your bag - it's old, it's art style and animation look antiquated by today's standards, the story doesn't really grow or advance in new directions, and at times it's just plain silly. Still, ***Fist of the North Star*** has that lovable charm that classic anime has, and if you're a true anime buff then you just can't help but get a kick out of it. The redone music IS a definite no-no when it comes to "translation purity," but the new soundtrack doesn't bother me enough to make me argue the point with much fury. ***- shidoshi***









## Area 88: Ultimate Collection

Adventure • OAV • US Manga • 13+
50 min • Sub | Dub • VHS | LD | DVD

Anime B+ DVD B-

### Anime

ck years ago, I remember running across a little known tit- e called *Area 88* while visiting a local comic shop. Area 88 ouldn't have caught my attention if it hadn't been for the ct that Capcom brought out a great little shooter called *UN quadron*, a game I loved to play in the arcades. So, natural- when I realized that this was the manga that spawned at game, I decided to check it out. After reading a couple issues I was hooked - *Area 88* grows on you in that acrossian-soap-opera kind of way. The story revolves ound Shin Kazama, a guy who had everything going for m until it was all taken away by his supposed est friend Kanzaki. Shin is tricked one night by nzaki, while drunk, into signing his soul away to e Asran Mercenary Air Force. With Shin out of the ay, Kanzaki believed he'd be able to steal away e heroes beautiful girl, Ryoko. Stuck in Asran, hin has to become the one thing he hates the ost - a cold blooded fighter pilot. For him to turn to his normal life, he must do one of three things - pay the 1.5 million dollar penalty to Asran, try to desert, or stick it out for a three year term. The manga is represented quite well onscreen: the pacing of the film is kept pretty fateful, and the artist's love for the detail of modern war avionics shines through with ever plane that is introduced in the story. If you enjoy a good soap opera type anime such as the before mentioned *Macross* (although the dog fighting isn't nearly as exciting) this title might just be what you're looking for. *- Maurice Williams*

### DVD

*Area 88* pretty much falls into the "standard DVD" category for Central Park Media - a competent compression job, picture quality that is nice but not sparkling, and overall, a worthy conversion of an older title to DVD, yet nothing that would be considered a show off disc. I get that weird "shimmering" effect on this disc like I did on Grave of the Fireflies, but it seems that is a weird effect of my set-up, not the disc. As I said, not an "all out" disc, but I never expected it to be, and it certainly gets the job done - and that's what is important. *- shidoshi*







## Tenchi in Tokyo: A New Enemy

Comedy/Action • TV (3 eps.) • Pioneer • 13+
75 min • Sub | Dub • VHS | LD | DVD

Anime A- DVD B+

### Anime

Lookie here... another volume of *Tenchi in Tokyo*, another set of wacky adventures, another 75 minutes of fun times with your favorite cast. Over the last volume or two, the series has taken on a slightly more serious tone, and you know what? I love it. Yes, I remember saying that I was glad *TiT* was more comedic and not as series last time I covered it, but this is a different kind of series, one *Tenchi* has been somewhat lacking with it's large cast fully of possibilities. I know a lot of *Tenchi* fans have bashed *TiT*, for it's storylines, different interpretations of the characters, and new style of artwork. Well, I'm here to stand up for it, as I think it's worlds better than *Tenchi Universe*. The characters really aren't that different, and the new art style, while not traditional *Tenchi*, is beautiful and very fitting for this series (I'm really getting into this art style, that somewhat strange look that titles like *Kite*, *Perfect Blue*, *Lain*, and other such titles has). This one is very much growing on me, and so is Sakuya.. I'm actually rooting for Tenchi to end up with her in the end.



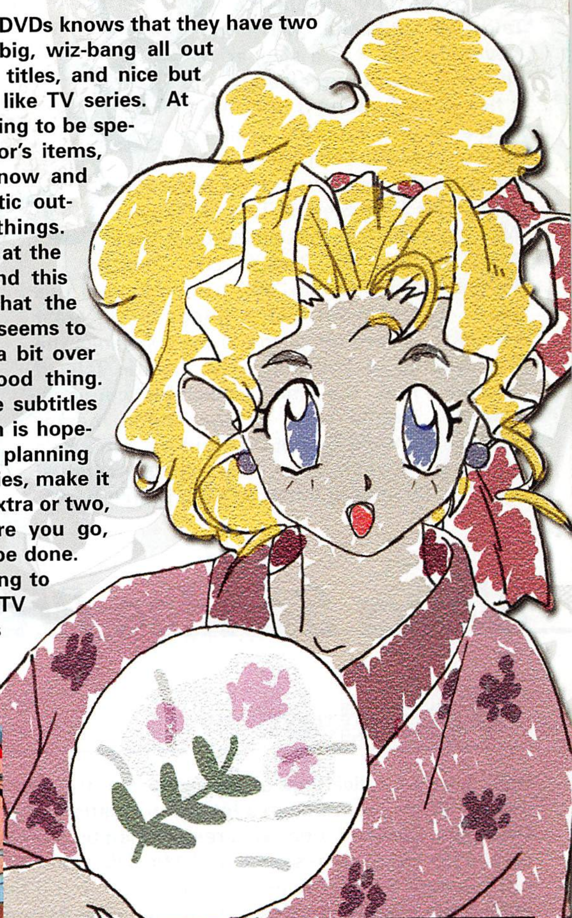
### DVD

Anyone familiar with Pioneer's DVDs knows that they have two "levels" of DVD production - big, wiz-bang all out efforts for their major feature titles, and nice but bare-bones packages for things like TV series. At first, of course, I wanted everything to be special-edition feature-laden collector's items, but I'm a bit older and wiser now and actually have a realistic outlook on some things. Actually, after looking at the first volume of *TiT* and this one, I have to say that the quality of the transfer seems to have improved quite a bit over time - definitely a good thing. Not only that, but the subtitles are yellow now, which is hopefully a trend Pioneer is planning to continue with. Take a TV series, make it look pretty on DVD, slap on an extra or two, give it chapter stops, and there you go, that's all that actually needs to be done. So long as Pioneer keeps working to put out even the little things like TV shows on DVD, and so long as they look and sound nice, that's all I could really ask for. *- shidoshi*









Rough Marker Mihoshi
by Maurice Williams



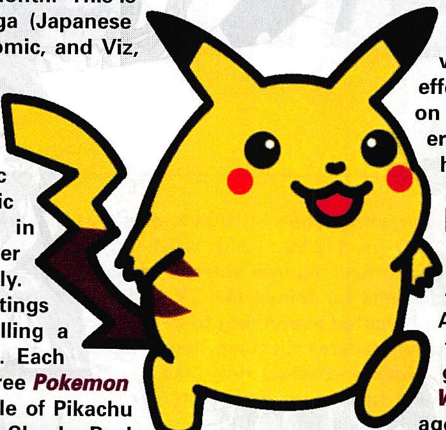
# AF News Service

## Pokemania Continues

If you've already read the Goods Showcase article on upcoming ***Pokemon*** products from Viz, that's now all of the news to come from them about these popular little Nintendo creatures. It seems that the ***Pokemon*** manga decided that it was going to take over the US comic market, and became the best-selling comic on our shores. Anyhow, here's the press release:

Viz Comics proudly announces that its ***Pokemon*** comic book is the best-selling comic in America.

Totaling sales from comic stores, newsstands, and other retailers, each monthly issue of ***Pokemon*** sells more copies over time than any other title published that month. This is the first time that a manga (Japanese comic), a black & white comic, and Viz, America's 5th largest comic publisher, has been #1.



Viz's first ***Pokemon*** comic issue (Pokemon: The Electric Tale of Pikachu #1) in November '98 was a sleeper hit and sold out immediately. It has gone through 8 printings in the past 8 months, selling a total of over 200,000 copies. Each successive issue of Viz's three ***Pokemon*** mini-series (The Electric Tale of Pikachu (Nov. '98-Feb. '99), Pikachu Shocks Back (Mar. '99-Jun. '99), and Electric Pikachu Boogaloo (Jul. '99-Oct. '99)) has continued this trend. The sold-out first printings are in great demand; Wizard magazine (June '99) ranks the first printing of Pokemon: The Electric Tale of Pikachu #1 as the most collectible comic in America. Initial sales to the comic market through Diamond Comic Distributors, America's largest comic distributor, have steadily climbed from No. 96 among initial sales in March to No. 56 in June (outselling series by Marvel, DC, Image, and Dark Horse). When adding the total sales from other stores and distribution, ***Pokemon*** outsells all other comics, and is now selling through more outlets than ever before.

## Angels or IRS?

Daily Yomiuri Online, a Japanese news website, reported that the president of Gainax, a very popular Japanese animation production company responsible for such titles as "Neon Genesis Evangelion," was arrested in early July on suspicion of concealing 1.5 billion yen in profits. In October of last year, the Tokyo Regional Taxation Bureau filed a complaint against Gainax and its president, Takeshi Sawamura, for supposedly violating the corporate tax law. According to sources, Gainax allegedly evaded paying about 500 million yen in corporate taxes for a two-year period, ending in July 1997. Tokyo prosecutors have begun investigating the company in Musashino, western Tokyo. What effect, if any, this will have on Gainax, it's current properties, or future projects will have to be seen.

## News on Sakura Wars DVD

ADV Films brought out the first volume of the video game-inspired ***Sakura Wars*** anime a few months ago, and this October, they will be bringing out the second volume. However, along with the second volume, they will also be releasing a DVD collection containing both volumes. Cool, you say? Well, what's even better is that the DVD version will have a suggested retail price of $29.95 - the price of ONE volume on VHS! When you consider that you not only get two volumes for that price, but that you also get them in both languages, that's quite a deal.. isn't DVD wonderful? It took ADV while to get into the DVD game, b now that they are here, they seem to very serious about it. So, if you're ***Sakura Wars*** fan, or just an anime DVD fan in general, look for this o coming in October.

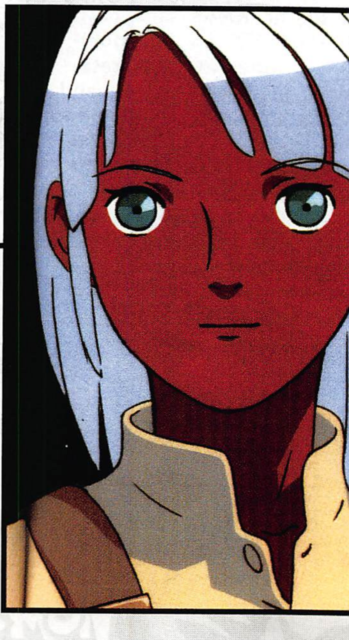
## Sailor Moon Says...

Guardians Of Order, Inc., the compa who brought us the Sailor Moon fan sy role-playing game (the pen and pap type), announced recently that it w release a ***Sailor Moon*** Collectab Button Combat Game and ***Sailor Mo*** Customized Dice in Autumn of 1999.

The ***Sailor Moon*** Collectable Butt Combat Game, based on James Ernes popular "Button Men" game, will sho off full-color artwork featuring t major heroes and villains from t ***Sailor Moon*** universe. The game is fast-paced two player interactive bat for any age, and is especially tailored f tournament play. The first six sets f the ***Sailor Moon*** Collectable Butt Combat Game will be available th Autumn, with expansions sets comi in Winter.

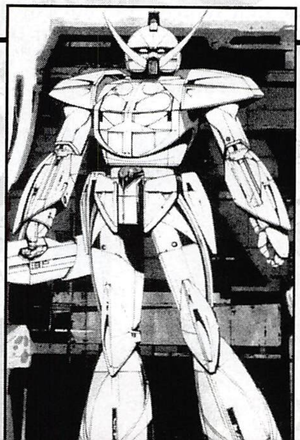
The ***Sailor Moon*** Role-Playing Gam which was released in November 1998, has proven to be a big hit. So, i only likely that accessories would released to join the main books an resource guides. The ***Sailor Mo*** Customized Dice are an accessory f any Sailor Moon RPG players out ther and contain two dice for each "Inne Sailor Scout and Tuxedo Mask - ea pairing of dice will match the unifor and "scheme" color of each scou Additional dice sets, which will go alon with other characters and the "Oute Sailor Scouts, will follow in early 2000

***- shidoshi***

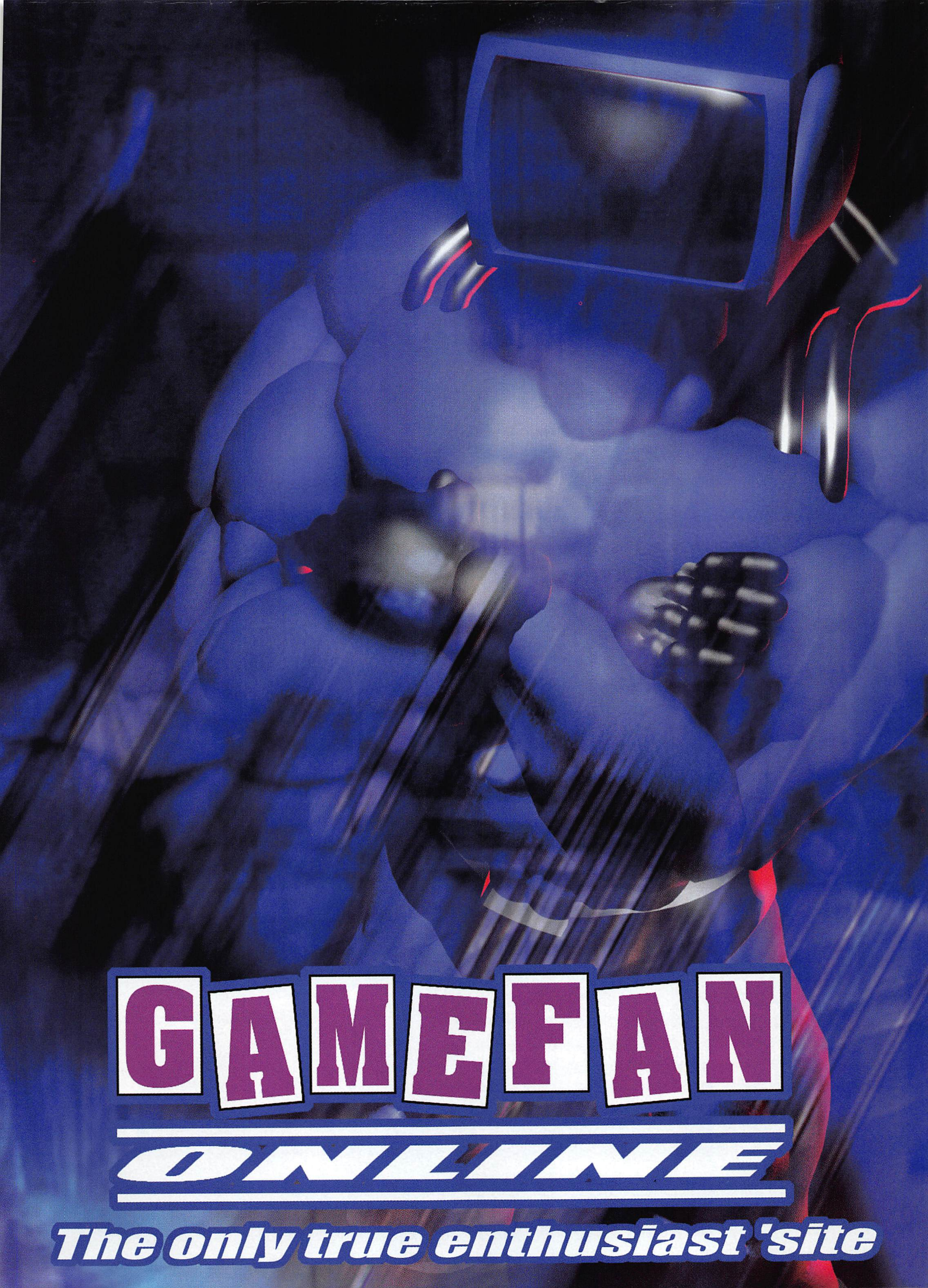


# News Service Previews

## ∀Gundam



Well, here's a quick look at the newest of the ***Gundam*** titles to his Japan. While I don't have a lot of information on it, I do know that the major ***Gundam*** robot was re-designed by Sid Mead, who helped on the design of things such as ***2010***, ***Alien***, and ***Blade Runner***. I'm not too sure if I like the new design or not, but it reminds me of the older-style mecha and robots from the early days of anime, so that is kind of a cool aspect. That, or it just looks silly. ***- shidoshi***


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# Hocus Pocus



Welcome to the pages of cheats, codes, and hints galore!!! Upon these leaves you will find all the assistance you'll need for the hottest games today. Not satisfied? Need help on another game? No problem! If you need codes or hints on any game, mail to GameFan, or e-mail hocuspocus@gamefan.com. Now, travel with thy controller in hand, to a place where cheaters prosper...

**GRAND PRIZE**
GXTV!

**FIRST PRIZE**
VIEWPOINT GAME OF YOUR CHOICE

**SECOND PRIZE**
POCKET GAMEBOY

**THIRD PRIZE**
1-YEAR SUBSCRIPTION TO GAMEFAN

## gXtv CONTEST



GXTV is the world's first video game TV with hyper-amplified sound and graphics. Enhance the thrill of gaming with adjustable speaker doors, stereo surround sound and a 15-watt sub woofer. Plus, the intense screen graphics will make you feel like your head's right inside the game. GXTV is also a 181-channel, 13" stereo TV with two A/V inputs, stereo headphone jack, backlit remote control and tilt/swivel stand. So whatcha waitin' for? Send in those codes and maybe you can win one of these GXTVs for yourself!

### SW Episode One: Racer Unlock All Cheats

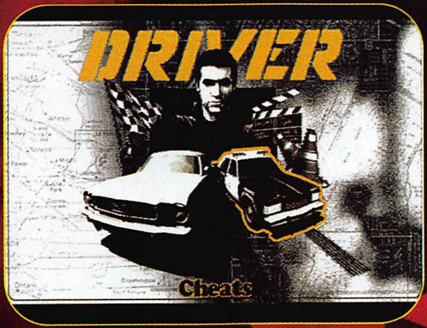


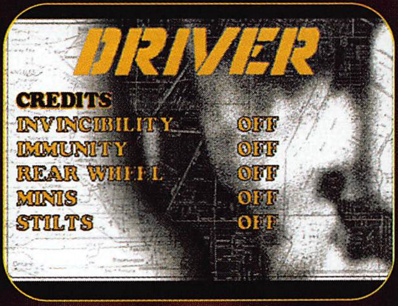

Select tournament mode, and select an empty save slot. Now, before you enter any initials hold Z, and enter "RRTANGENT" using L Shift to select each letter. You should see the letters appear in the bottom left corner each time you enter a letter. Once this is done, highlight "End" and press L, then B. Select the same file, then hold Z and enter "ABACUS" using the L Shift again to enter each letter. Then, highlight "End" and press L Shift, followed by A. The words "OK" should appear at the bottom left corner. Now, enter your initials and start a game. Pause anytime and use the D-pad to press up, left, down, and right. The Cheat Menu option should appear and all the cheats should be unlocked.



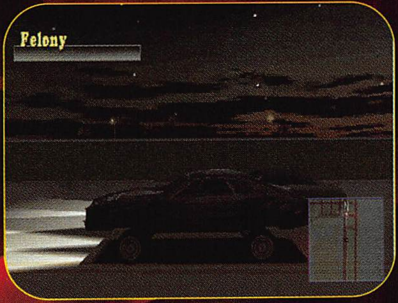

### Driver Cheat Codes

Driver
Cheat Codes
Enter one of the following cheats at the main menu. You will hear a confirmation sound if you input the code correctly.




Invincibility - Press L2, L2, R2, R2, L2, R2, L2, L1, R2, R1, L2, L1, L1.
No police - Press L1, L2, R1, R1, R1, R1, L2, L2, R1, R1 L1, L1, R2.
Rear wheel steering - Press R1, R1, R1, R2, L2, R1, R2, L2, L1, R2, R1, L2, L1.
Long suspension - Press R2, L2, R1, R2, L2, L1, R2, R2, L2, L2, L1, R2, R1
Mini cars - Press R1, R2, R1, R2, L1, L2, R1, R2, L1, R1, L2, L2, L2



## Croc 2
### Gain 100 Crystals

On the Title Screen, hold L1 and then press ■, ■, ●, ↓, ←, →, ←, and →. You should hear a soft confirmation sound if you input the code correctly. During gameplay hold down R2 and press n to add 100 crystals.



## KoF '99 Dream Match
### Different Character Versions

At the character selection screen, highlight one of the following fighters, then hold Start and press any button. Some of the special versions of the characters may have missing moves (like the alternate Terry Bogard with no Power Dunk), but for the most part they have most of their moves.



Terry Bogard - *Real Bout 2* Terry Bogard



Andy Bogard - *Real Bout 2* Andy Bogard



Joe Higashi – *Real Bout 2* Joe Higashi



Mai Shiranui – *Real Bout 2* Mai Shiranui



Billy Kane – *Real Bout 2* Billy Kane



Ryo Sakazaki – *KoF '94* Ryo Sakazaki



Robert Garcia – *KoF '94* Robert Garcia



Yuri Sakazaki – *KoF '94* Yuri Sakazaki



Kyo Kusanagi – *KoF '95* Kyo Kusanagi



Yashiro – *KoF '97* Orochi Yashiro



Shermie – *KoF '97* Orochi Shermie



Chris – *KoF '97* Orochi Chris



Rugal – Omega Rugal(a special version just for the DC version)

## Quake II
### Various Password Codes

To enable the following password codes, you have to go to into the Single player Load Screen. When you're at the




Load Screen, select not to use the Memory Pack, and you'll get a pass-

word screen. Enter the following passwords at this screen:



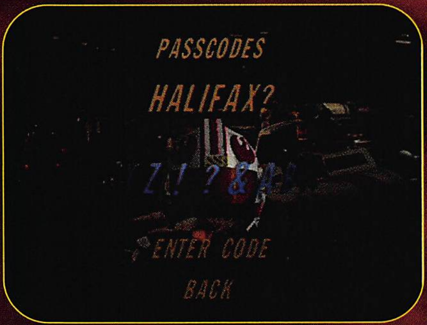

S3T1 NF1N 1T3S H0TS
Infinite ammo in multi-player mode

S3TL 0WGR VITY ????
Low gravity in multi-player mode

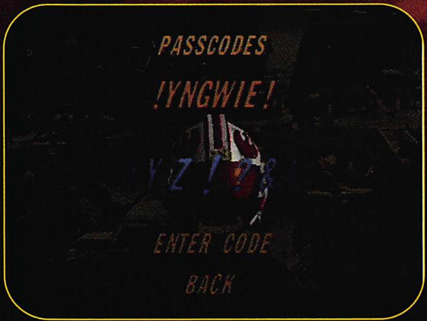



S3TC 00LC 0L0R S???
Alternate colors

### *Rogue Squadron*
### *Hidden Naboo Fighter*




Yes! Perhaps the best kept secret in *Rogue Squadron* finally is revealed! To play the Naboo Fighter in *Rogue Squadron*, go to the cheat screen and







enter "HALIFAX?", then enter "!YNGWIE!". The Naboo Fighter will be to the left of the X-Wing fighter. You can select the Naboo Fighter on any stage except snow levels.

## GameShark Codes

### *Evil Zone - PS*

Unlock Everything
800A83DE FFFF
800A83E0 FFFF
800A83E2 FFFF
800A83E4 FFFF

### *Ape Escape*

Infinite HP
800EC268 0005

Infinite Lifes
300F442C 0005

Infinite oxygen
800F4D68 0258

All items
D00F5164 0003
300F5164 00FF

### *Dino Crisis – PS Import*

Infinite Energy
800AE1DC 04B0

Turbo shooting
D0049208 0007
80049208 0001

Unlimited Bullet
D0062708 0000
80062708 2821

Clear Time 00.00
800B612C 0000
800B612E 0000

Continue - 0
300B6132 001E

Number Of Saves - 0
300B612B 0000

### *Fire Pro G Wrestling – PS Import*

All Techniques in Fighting Road mode
D0193A74 4445
30193A96 0002

### *Persona 2 – PS Import*

Infinite Money
8007F428 E0FF
8007F42A 05F5

Max Hp
80080540 03E7
80080542 03E7

Max Sp
80080544 03E7
80080546 03E7

All card
B0170002 0000
8007F7B6 03E7
B0160002 0000
8007F7E4 03E7
B0490002 0000
8007F810 03E7
B0060002 0000
8007F8A2 03E7

All items
B1260001 0000
3007F502 0063
B0430001 0000
3007F628 0063
B04A0001 0000
3007F66B 0063
B0410001 0000
3007F6B5 0063
B0870001 0000
3007F47C 0063
B04A0001 0000
3007F431 0063

### *Tales of Phantasia – PS Import*

Save Everywhere
D00DCC8C 0200
300DCC8D 0000
D0088726 6000
80088726 6200

Unlimited TP
D0014A40 52AD
80131E0A 0040
D0014A40 52AD
800A1C5A 0040

Infinite Money
8008740C 0098
8008740E 967F

Level up Each Round
80086F00 0000
80087180 0000

All of Cless' skills
D0014A40 52AD
B0130001 0001
30086F48 0001
30087A64 00FF
30087A66 00FF
30087A68 00FF
30087A6A 00FF
30087A6C 00FF
30087A6E 00FF

## Star Ocean: Second Story
### Private Actions Guide

One of the most unique features in the original *Star Ocean* were the Private Actions sequences. While these PA's were totally optional in the game, it allowed you to get secret items, secret characters, and more importantly, a




deeper involvement into the story. *Star Ocean: The Second Story* continues this feature, expanding it to the point where it very well could change any of the 87 possible endings. In fact, Private Actions in *Star Ocean: The Second*




*Story* are the most influential factor for determining the endings in the game. And with the mammoth amount of PA's in the game, it's a good thing you've turned to this page which list all of the Private Actions in all the towns in the




game.

***Private Actions: What the hell are they?***

Private Actions allow you to interact with different characters in your party. The ultimate goal in a Private Action is




to alter the relationship between characters, whether it's on a friendship level




or romantic level.

To see a Private Action, you'll have to be on the world map just outside of the town. As you approach a town, you'll see the Private Actions icon flashing in the upper right hand corner of the




screen. Press Square to activate the Private Action. This automatically makes you enter the town and your party will split up. Now, you'll be able to see different Private Actions that either involve the character your con-




trolling (Claude or Rena) or other characters. It's kind of a scavenger hunt to find some of your party members, but most aren't that hard to find.

As noted, Private Actions are primarily used to get different endings for each




character. Not all Private Actions will affect the relationship between characters. Some of the Private Actions may not do anything at all. But there are some Private Actions that will only occur once in a game that could drastically change an ending in the game. Most of these ending changing Private Actions come in major parts where you see the Private Action, leave the town, and activate the Private Action again.

As your relationship grows with certain characters, you'll see how it affects battle sequences. For example, say if Rena and Claude have been talking a lot in Private Actions and they've been developing a deep relationship. If during battle, Rena gets slain, don't be surprised if Claude starts to hit for double damage and attacking twice as fast. While there is no solid indicator of how the strong the relationship between characters are, when you reach Fun City (WAY later in the game) the fortune tellers there will be able to tell you who has romantic intentions with who in your party.

So with that, here is a list of the Private Actions that I have found with Claude in the game. If I happen to miss any (and I better not have) or if you have any comments/questions, feel free to email me at achau@gamefan.com. Watch out next issue for Rena's Private Action List.

***Claude's Private Action List***

Arlia
Location: Rena's House
Person to Find: Rena
Requirement: This PA takes place before Celine joins the party at the Town of Cross.

Location: The eastern section of Arlia
Person to Find: Rena and Precis
Requirement: Takes place after the events of the Lacour Tournament of Arms. You also must have Precis in your party.

Location: The easter section of Arlia
Person to Find: Celine
Requirement: Celine must be in your party. So far, I've had it happen 1 out of 3 times, but this PA seems to be random.

Location: Balcony of Mayor's House
Person to Find: Opera
Requirement: Opera must be in your party before you head out to the Hoffmann Ruins

Town of Salva
Location: Southern section of Salva
Person to Find: Rena
Requirement: Umm...just to notice that there is a PA when you reach this town.

Location: Right next to the Weapons Shop in Salva
Person to Find: Young girl
Requirement: Stay at the inn in the Town of Cross.

Location: The Jewelry Shop of Salva
Person to Find: Rena
Requirement: Stay at the inn in the Town of Cross

Location: The Jam Shop of Salva
Person to Find: Precis
Requirement: Precis must be in your party.

Location: Entrance to the Salva mine
Person to Find: Ashton
Requirement: Ashton must be in your party.

Location: Southern section of Salva
Person to Find: Opera
Requirement: Opera must be in your party

Location: Jam Shop of Salva
Person to Find: Celine
Requirement: Celine must be in your party.

Town of Cross
Location: East section of Town of Cross
Person to Find: Rena and Celine
Requirement: Takes place before the major events at the Port of Clik. Celine must be in your party

Location: West section of Town of Cross
Person to Find: Ashton and Precis
Requirement: Ashton and Precis must be in your party, and you have to have enough money to buy a Music Box.

Location: Town of Cross
Person to Find: Bowman
Requirement: Bowman must be in your party.

Location: The street right before going into Cross Castle
Person to Find: Ernest
Requirement: Right after you get Celine in your party.

Port of Clik
Location: Port of Clik
Person to Find: Filia, the fortune teller
Requirement: Happens before the major events at Port of Clik

Mars Village
Location: Eastern section of Mars
Person to Find: Rena
Requirement: Happens before you enter the Lacour Tournament of Arms

Location: Eastern section of Mars
Person to Find: Ashton
Requirement: Ashton must be in your party and before you enter the Lacour Tournament of Arms.

Location: Western section of Mars
Person to Find: Rena
Requirement: Happens anytime after you have visited of Hilton but before you enter the Lacour Tournament of Arms.

Location: Western section of Mars
Person to Find: Precis
Requirement: Precis must be in your party and before you enter the Lacour Tournament of Arms.

Location: Tool Shop of Mars
Person to Find: Precis
Requirement: Precis must be in your party and before you enter the Lacour Tournament of Arms (see a pattern here?).

Port of Herlie
Location: Eleanor's house in Port of Herlie
Person to Find: Bowman
Requirement: Bowman must be in your party and happens before the major events in Lacour take place.

Hilton
Location: Hilton
Person to Find: Prince Chris from the Town of Cross
Requirement: Celine must not be in your party. Happens right after you arrive in Hilton.

Location: The inn at Hilton
Person to Find: Celine
Requirement: Celine must be in your party.

Lacour
Location: Eastern section of Lacour
Person to Find: Young girl
Requirement: Happens before the major events of Lacour

Location: Western section of Lacour
Person to Find: Old woman
Requirement: Happens before the major events of Lacour.

Location: Academy Library
Person to Find: Rena
Requirement: Umm...find Rena

Location: Lacour Academy
Person to Find: Salesman
Requirement: none

Town of Linga
Location: Precis's House
Person to Find: Precis
Requirement: You have to see the Private Action with Precis in the Town of Salva first.

Location: Northern section of Linga
Person to Find: Precis
Requirement: Happens after the major event of Lacour takes place. Also, Bowman can't be in your party.

Central City
Location: Brandywine Inn
Person to Find: Rena
Requirement: Takes place right after you arrive in Central City
Location: Brandywine Inn
Person to Find: Opera
Requirement: Ernest cannot be in your party.

Location: Brandywine Inn
Person to Find: Noel
Requirement: Noel has to be in your party.

Location: City Hall
Person to Find: Chisato
Requirement: Chisato must be in your party and you must talk to Rayfus at the University.

Location: Landscape Inn
Person to find: Celine
Requirement: Celine must be in your party.

North City
Location: North City
Person to Find: Opera
Requirement: Opera must be in your party, but Ernest cannot. This PA only happens after you have beaten all four fields (Intelligence, Power, Courage, and Love).

Location: Tool Shop
Person to Find: Chisato
Requirement: Chisato must be in your party.

Location: North City
Person to Find: Precis
Requirement: Make sure to visit Fienal

Location: Encyclopedia
Person to Find: Rena
Requirement: none

Giveaway
Location: Giveaway University
Person to Find: Ernest
Requirement: Ernest must be in your party.

Location: Giveaway University
Person to Find: Chisato
Requirement: Chisato must be in your party. Also, you have to have beaten all four fields.

Location: Noel's House
Person to Find: Noel
Requirement: Noel must be in your party.

Town of Armlock
Location: Yamato Restaurant
Person to Find: Ashton
Requirement: Ashton must be in your party.

Location: Mirage's House
Person to Find: Leon
Requirement: Leon must be in your party.

Fun City
Location: Inn
Person to Find: Precis
Requirement: Precis must be in your party.

Location: Fortune-telling rooms
Person to Find: Rena
Requirement: none

Location: Fighting Arena
Person to Find: Precis and Ashton
Requirement: Both members must be in your party. Furthermore, Ashton must know the Sword Dance technique.

## Power Stone Winner's Guide

There's no doubt that *Power Stone* is one of the most anticipated titles for the Dreamcast, thanks in part to its popularity in arcades, as well as the fact that it's a bitchin' game in its own right. So if you want tips and strategies about *Power Stone*, who are you going to trust? Those second-rate video game magazines? Well, if you wanna be second best, that's fine. But if you want to be the cream of the crop, the best of the best, the top dog, then you've come to the right place. ECM and I, your friendly neighborhood dango, will give you the lowdown on our E3-tournament-winning tactics, our ace-in-the-hole tricks, and our Sun Tzu-like strategies. We won't guarantee that you'll be able to topple either of us in *Power Stone* (cuz a lot of it has to do with our raw talent which only a serious blood transfusion *may* impart) but you will notice a rise in the number of victories you experience. Now, let's batter some buffoons!

### ● The Basic Tactics

### Jump Kick



Without a doubt, the jump kick is to *Power Stone* as the fireball is to *Street Fighter II*. Not only does the jump kick automatically lock on to where your opponent is, it also knocks loose any Power Stones that your unwary target possesses. It's important to note that if two players jump kick simultaneously, the one who jumps the highest will win the joust. This is where characters with double-jump abilities have the advantage (e.g. Fokker and Ayame).



### Ceiling Hang



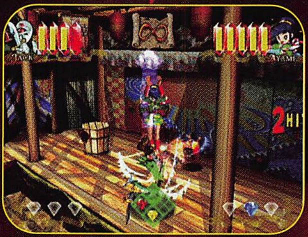
One tactic that has its advantages in certain situations, is the ceiling hang. Jump, press up on the controls plus the grab command.



You'll hang up top and move along the ceiling. This leads to the loosening of certain objects from the ceiling, which you can then use to



smite your unworthy opponent. Also, pressing the kick button will automatically perform a jump kick. Even better,



if you're directly above an opponent, use the smash attack (while in the air, down plus the grab command).

### Remember, Walls And Poles Are Your Friends




Make use of everything in the stages if you want to be the best of the best. Proper use of the walls and poles can be just



the advantage you need to overcome difficult enemies. Walls are extremely useful in two ways. First, jumping off the wall will open up more options for attacking and evading. However, an important attack that shouldn't be overlooked is performed by simply walking against a wall



and pressing the grab command. This will make your fighter launch himself off the wall towards the opponent. This can also be done in the air — just jump against the wall and press the grab command for the aerial version. Secondly, slamming an opponent into walls can loosen certain objects around him. Examples include the gourds on the wall in Wang Tang's stage, and the barrels above the wall in Galuda's stage.

Poles and beams have two main uses. All characters can jump onto a beam and slide up or down. From this position, you can immediately jump kick by pressing the kick



button, or try for a smash attack with the grab command. Another trick to keep in mind is the spin attack. With the exception of Gunrock



and Galuda, if a character is on the ground right next to a beam, use the grab command and your character will start spinning around the post and eventually launch himself at an opponent. While it's an easily telegraphed attack, it looks really cool. Performing a grab command on the beam with Galuda or Gunrock will cause them to grab it and smack the enemy with it. Also, all characters in their Power Drive Mode can uproot the pole to use as a weapon.

### Evading




One of the more advanced techniques is evading close attacks. Whether it's a weapon, a barrel, or a foot in the chest, use the evasion




technique to sidestep attacks. Evasion is executed by pressing any direction (except towards your opponent), and the grab command. A blue shadow trail will appear from



where you were and you'll sidestep in that direction. This technique is excellent for attackers using weapons like bazookas or flame-throwers. Simply get close to them, and as they try to shoot you, evade and attack immediately!

### Power Drive Tips

One of the biggest mistakes rookie players make is wasting their Power Drive attacks immediately after transforming. This is a HUGE mistake since you have a certain amount of protection from

attack while in Power Drive form. Best thing to do? Use other weapons to attack the opponents until you are sure you will hit them with your Power Drive attack. The ideal thing is to stun them without exhausting the Power Drive Meter, thereby setting up a Power Fusion attack for maximum damage.



### Dangohead's Dojo:

While ECM may have gotten the better of me during the finals of the E3 *Power Stone* tournament, I attribute it to two things: (1) his prowess at *Power Stone* and (2) those cute Eidos models who kept winking at me while I was playing! But excuses aside, pounding the other "professional gamers" into little, itty-bitty pieces was no problem. You want to know more about how the one and only Dangohead dropped bombs like Hiroshima upon the so-called competition? Well, read forth my young pupils and you will learn.

**Character of Choice: Gunrock**

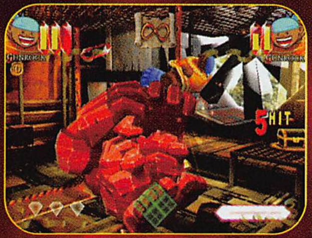
First off, the great majority of players at E3 played the likes of Wang Tang, Fokker (now Falcon), Ayame, and Ryoma. Little did they know that they should've been using Gunrock, as he's probably the most powerful character in the game. How do I know this? Because I used him all the way up until the finals! Then, of course, I switched to Wang Tang, which was my only mistake of the tournament (ECM's Note: ah, here come the **real** excuses).

So why Gunrock you ask? Sure, he's a big target that's easy to hit. And yes, he doesn't have the hops of Wang Tang nor the speed of Ayame. However, he's the strongest character in the game, possesses an excellent Power Fusion, and has the fastest throwing ability of all the characters (followed by Galuda, Fokker, Ryoma, Wang Tang, Jack, Rouge, and Ayame). Gunrock may not suit beginner-to-intermediate players, but for those advanced in the ways of the *Power Stone*, Gunrock is your best choice.

**Gunrock Tactics**

**Power Fusion: Rock 'N Roll**

As stated above, Gunrock has an excellent Power Fusion attack called "Rock 'N Roll." Growing to twice his size, Gunrock rolls into a ball and steamrolls anything in his way. This Power Fusion instantly hits as soon as he expands in size, and if you



happen to be the unlucky recipient of this attack, you might as well go and make yourself a PB&J sandwich. If you're playing Gunrock, you can actually juggle your hapless victim by jumping while performing the Rock 'N Roll Power Fusion.

**Death From Above**



Once you've got all three Power Stones and it's "clobberin' time," one attack that often confuses opponents is jumping in the air and press-



ing Kick. This will send Gunrock smashing down to the ground. If you don't hit your opponent with this "Death From Above" attack, when Gunrock lands on the



ground, a giant rock will erupt from the ground and hit any standing opponent. This attack stuns the opponent, which can be followed up with any choice attack (I

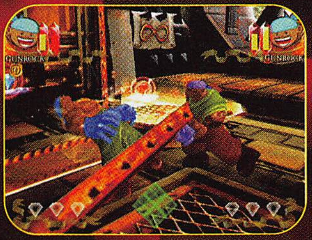


like throwing the target, since it doesn't decrease the Power Drive Meter).

**Yell Loud and Use a Big Stick**



One advanced tactic I love using is grabbing beams or poles and whacking the target in mid-air. Gunrock and Galuda are the only characters



that can tear away beams and poles to use as very, large bats. While this is fun, it also has an EXTREME amount of delay. One trick I like to use is when an opponent is holding an object that can be thrown.



I try to predict when they're going to throw the item, and right before they do, I grab a pole, and hit both the thrown object AND the enemy in one swing! This is really hard to do against Galuda, who can hurl boxes and barrels like fastballs.

**Barrels, boxes, and various flinging items o' hurt**

Boxes, crates, barrels, stone decorations, drums, bombs, chairs, tables, wooden horses, packages, pots, signs... I could go on, but I think you've got the picture. The mainstay



weapon that's abundant on every stage, thrown objects are the weapons that every *Power Stone* player must know how to use. Since I use Gunrock, who hurls objects at Pedro Martinez velocities,



thrown objects are definitely the best weapons. Also, different thrown objects may have different properties when they hit. For example, the large gourd will automatically cover an enemy's head if it connects properly. While the enemy is trying to get the gourd off his head, he's open for an attack. Finally, bombs



need special care in use, for the obvious reason that they can explode in your hand. Smaller bombs have a timer of three seconds while the "Fat Man" bombs have a six second timer. NEVER toss the bomb too early, as the opponent can catch it and toss it back at you! Toss it right when the timer has one second left. And if you don't want to directly toss a bomb at a target, use the kick button and direct your throw to anywhere you like.

### My Rankings

To round it all off, here are my two cents on all the characters and how they rank.

8) Jack

Slow and weird, I really can't see anyone using this character unless they're playing to win by time. While he's not

the fastest character, his helicopter move (jump, then press punch in the air) allows him to escape most dangers. His Power Drive attacks aren't that great since both of them can be easily dodged. His Killer Dance Power Fusion has good priority and can hit enemies behind him, but still has small range. Misery Rain Power Fusion can be easily dodged, despite the good damage it delivers.

7) Rouge
Though she has good jump capabilities, Rouge still isn't powerful enough. Her throw speed is awful, being 2nd worst in the game. Worst still are her Power Drive attacks. Her Flame attack is easily avoided, and getting her Magic Carpet attack to hit is an exercise in futility. Her saving grace is the fact that she has three Power Fusion attacks. While the Power Fire Power Fusion attack can be somewhat easily avoided, it does good damage, as well as her Love Dance Power Fusion attack. Her third, the Skull Fire, is done in the air. It's both long-range and hard to avoid. Surprisingly, it doesn't do as much damage as you'd think.

6) Galuda
Despite having excellent power and throw speed (second only to Gunrock), Galuda has huge weaknesses: his somewhat slow speed and weaker state in Power Drive mode, compared to other characters. His Light Arrow Power Drive attack isn't bad, but it's rather slow and easy to dodge. The Divine Punishment of Light Power Fusion does good damage, but again, is easy to dodge. Finally, to connect with the Heaven and Sky War Cry Power Fusion attack, you have to be at throw distance of your target or they have to be jumping at you. While this Power Fusion attack deals a ton of damage, it's very tough to connect.

5) Ayame
While she's the fastest character in the game with good jumping skills, Ayame has the slowest throwing speed and needs to connect a lot of times to do damage. Her Power Drive attacks are okay, but easily dodged. And despite what you see, her 100 Flower Power Fusion attack can be EASILY avoided. And unless you're really close, her Cherry Blossom Dance Power Fusion attack can be easily dodged. Even if it connects, the 100 Flower Power Fusion attack does more damage.

4) Ryoma
Average speed with good damaging attacks, Ryoma's strength lies in the fact that he's armed with a sword. This gives him excellent range on his normal attacks and it's hard to evade some of his sword swings. Ryoma has decent Power Drive and Power Fusion attacks, but when compared to some of the other characters, his Power Fusion attacks do average damage. When in Power Drive Mode, holding the kick button will keep him from releasing his laizin Power Drive attack, which is useful against an opponent that keeps jumping. A good character for beginners.

3) Fokker
Fokker (or Falcon) is a good choice. Nice speed, large damage, and the ability to double jump... the only weakness is his Power Rocket Power Fusion attack. If the first hit of this attack misses, it's pretty easy to dodge the rest of the hits. Otherwise, his attacks in Power Drive form are excellent, and his Power Explosion Power Fusion attack is hard to avoid.

2) Wang Tang
ECM's favorite character and undoubtedly one of the most powerful characters in the game, Wang Tang has excellent speed, great jumping ability, and his Power Drive attacks are excellent. His Power Fusion attacks are quite damaging, but his Great Dragon Ball Power Fusion attack is avoided easily if you're far away. Likewise, the Military Heaven Dance has a good chance of hitting the opponent, as long as they're pretty close to you.

1) Gunrock
What he lacks in speed, he makes up for in everything else. Thus, Gunrock is arguably the best character in the game. Awesome damage, the fastest throwing speed in the game, combined with decent Power Drive attacks, and good Power Fusion attacks, making him my choice pick. While Wang Tang has better mobility, he needs to hit the enemy more often to do substantial damage. Gunrock's motto? "If you can do it in one hit, then do it in one hit!"



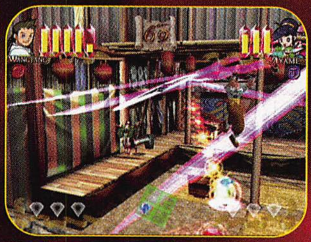
***●Hail to the King, Baby!***

Welcome *Power Stone* warriors, tis I, ECM. Still fresh from the recent ass-handing at the E3 *Power Stone* Press Tourney (I, of course, was handing out the asses). While Dango is a mighty warrior in his own right, his skills pale in comparison to the 'one who is always angry.' So sit for a spell, young grasshoppas, and prepare to be enlightened in the way of the warrior (<urk>, that hurt).

***Who Ya Gonna Call?***

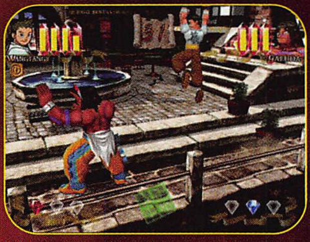
So you want to know who you should use to put the hurt on those mere mortals you call opponents (we like to call 'em pro-gamers... hah!)? It's quite simple, really. While Dangohead advocates the use of Gunrock (a truly tough customer), I'm gonna stick by my guns and say, if you want to win, Wang-Tang is the **only** way to go; brutal strength is no substitute for raw speed in the kinetic world of Power Stone.

***I Feel the Need for Speed***



The key to playing an effective Wang-Tang is simple: the boy moves faster than nearly any other character in the game (only Ayame is quicker) and you should completely abuse this! This becomes incredibly important when dodging missile attacks from enemies, and those feeble jump-kicking fools who think that's all *PS* is about (believe me, E3 was a jump kick-fest; it was nigh-laughable). Confucius say: 'Silly player who abuse jump kick end up with big headache.' Better yet, couple his lightning reflexes with some serious evasion practice (as noted above), and you'll walk away from round after round without a scratch. While he isn't the fastest character, his short hops make him an ace for dodging all manner of missile attacks, including Ayame's 100 Flower Power Fusion attack (which is much harder to circumvent with the other characters, despite what Dango says).

***Stomp Kick of Doom***



While it's simply poor form to repeatedly assault your foe with a feeble array of jump kicks, the Stomp Kick is where it's at. Simply launch yourself directly over a foe's head (preferably when they're in a corner and don't have much chance of escape) and lay a barrage of stomps to the head



(Chun-Li apparently taught WT some lessons) by pressing punch and kick. For the even more unwary, chase the more foolish around the ring at the beginning of a match and Stomp Kick them the second the round starts. While it won't do much good on somebody proficient in evading, it's a pretty quick way to mop the floor with the meat (it came in mighty handy at the tourney).

***Wang Tang's Power Drive Punch***

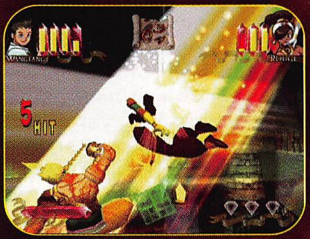


WT's energy bolts can be amazingly destructive, but here's a couple of quick tips on efficient delivery: **never** deliver the 3rd Strike! Sure, it's tempting to keep pummeling your foe into submission, but by only striking twice, you set them up for an instant barrage of two more strikes. Best



yet, it won't deplete your Power Drive bar nearly as much as when you use all three, allowing more miles per gallon (perhaps setting them up for a nice MHD PF move). Oh, and the key to nailing quicker foes with this attack is getting right up near them and doing a couple of quick feints to confuse 'em, then jump and blast the snot outta 'em.

Unless you have somebody hopelessly trapped in a corner or stunned (a la the ol' pot on the head trick), forget about ever using WT's Great Dragon Ball Power Fusion Attack. Advanced players will simply dodge it with ease, or if you



think yourself cool and attempt to nail a downed foe, they'll more than likely 'wake up' and toss you right out of your pretty super. The Military Heaven Dance, however, is incredibly useful (and very flashy... each time this move was executed successfully at E3, the crowd erupted in cheers). The key is chaining it with a flurry of punches,



kicks or a little of both. Simply begin a standard chain combo, and toss in the MHD towards the end and feel the satisfaction as your foe's life bar is whittled away to nothing. For serious style points, execute the MHD PF in mid-air when an opponent is sure to buy it... the judges will score it a 10, and you can laugh as your next pants-wetting opponent steps up to the chopping block >=)

### *Conserve Your Strength... Then Strike!*



More important than the Power Fusion moves, however, is, as Dango stated: Do not waste your Power Fusion attack early on! Save it for a last hurrah as your Power Drive bar is nearly depleted. Or better yet, beat down your foe without using the PF moves. Instead, make use of the various items scattered throughout the arena coupled with your increased resistance to attacks (the sword is my favorite) and shave the miscreants life bar to so much ruby glitter.

### *What Comes Around Goes Around*



Oh, and one more note: learn to catch thrown objects! Some players like to abuse those that are unskilled in the ways of receiving presents from their 'friends.' Teach



anyone that tries to abuse this technique by snagging a tossed package (be it bomb, crate, or furniture) and mark it return to sender... address unknown (thank you very much...).

### *The Also-Rans*

So, you're not completely convinced that Wang Tang is the man, eh? Well, if you insist on using one of those 'other' characters then here's my listing from worst to almost best of the fighters you shouldn't be using unless you absolutely must make things harder on yourself.

8) Jack
I'll have to 'ditto' with Dango on this one. Jack is simply the lamest character in the game. Someone made a feeble attempt at using him in the tourney and was summarily annihilated. The character simply doesn't control well, and isn't particularly good at anything. Besides, he's probably not the friendliest chap around (rhymes with whipper) and you don't want him winning the Power stones for himself.

7) Galuda
OK, he's strong. And OK, Dango managed to take out some of the garbage at the E3 tourney when he accidentally selected him instead of Gunrock, but this guy still sucks. The problem is, while his attacks are extremely devastating (not his Power Fusion moves, though), he simply has a very poor power-to-speed ratio. And as was noted above, speed is the key in this game (unless you go with Gunrock, see below). If you want to win, he's **not** the way to go.

6) Rouge
The only reason Rouge didn't finish below Galuda is the simple fact that she has some pretty nifty attacks that can catch an unwary attacker off guard. While Dango is correct in saying her Power Fusion moves are pretty weak, I'd have to say it's not a very pleasant experience if someone happens to be engulfed in the Power Fire attack. She's also pretty quick which **never** hurts in this game.

5) Ryoma
This guy is pretty useless beyond some solid range normal attacks thanks to his handy sword. Outside of that, his mostly pointless Power Fusion attacks aren't going to win him any points. Still, he's more powerful than Rouge and quicker than Galuda so he can't be all bad. I like to focus on lots of throw attacks in between sword flourishes, coupled with equal amounts of hit-and-run tactics (especially 'hiding' on the roof after whittling a foe down a bit). Just don't rely on his Power Fusion moves.

4) Ayame
Ayame scores serious points simply because of her raw, near-uncontrollable speed. The only fatal fly in the ointment is the fact that she can become a bear to control when things get extremely hectic. While Wang Tang is at the cusp of just fast enough, Ayame trips over it into super-sonic territory. It becomes a bit difficult when things get heated to easily target a foe without overshooting the objective. On the plus side, it's much harder to evade Ayame's hand-to-hand attacks and her 100 Flower Power Power Fusion can wreak immense damage on those less-skilled in the hopping or running arts.

3) Fokker
While I wouldn't pick the Ryu of *Power Stone* for his Power Fusion moves (too slow and too easy to avoid), he's a solid character that can deal some serious damage. While he's among the slower characters in the game, his strength more than makes up for any shortcomings there. Problem is, he's only a character for veteran players that have mastered the basics (same goes for Gunrock), as you'll need to do quite a bit of evading to avoid being pummeled by skilled Wang Tang players.

2) Gunrock
Dango is right in that Gunrock is a character that only the most advanced players should tackle. His **immense** strength and high level of resistance (it's very hard to damage this guy) make him a force to be reckoned with in the hands of a highly skilled player. Dango probably made a huge mistake in choosing WT over him in the final, simply because you should stick with what you know (something I was more than happy to capitalize on) and Dangohead **knows** Gunrock. Featuring an arsenal of extremely deadly attacks (everything from basic punches to his Power Fusion moves), Gunrock is the character you move on to once you've completely mastered every other aspect of the game — and **not** until then.

1) Wang Tang
Do I even need to bother?

## Not Enough Dreamcasts?!!

A bit of disturbing news for Sega fans, an ugly industry rumor claims that Sega is having problems producing enough Dreamcasts to meet the tremendous U.S. demand. It's gotten to the point that there's talk of Sega selling Japanese Dreamcasts in U.S. boxes when the system launches in September. Considering initial sales of the system in Japan didn't go as well as hoped for, if this rumor were true, it would effectively kill two birds with one stone. Let's hope this is just a rumor, so we don't have to cry about it later.

## PocketStation Difficulties

Speaking of production problems, Sony can't churn out the Pocket Stations (whose batteries don't die in three hours) fast enough to meet the large demand out there. As you may have noticed, Sony of America hasn't announced any plans to bring the Pocket Station here yet, due to the difficulties in Japan. The miniature, VMU-like memory card/portable game system is being supported by many Japanese games, including *Final Fantasy VIII*. Thankfully, Square EA has announced that the U.S. version of *FFVIII* will retain Pocket Station compatibility, even though it's not out yet. So when and if the PS comes Stateside, at least gamers can sausage out with Triple Triad on their Pocket Stations.

## Super GameBoy Dolphin?

On a minor peripheral note, word on the street says that the GameBoy Color will be compatible with Nintendo's next-gen console (Dolphin) in some way, but details are very sketchy at the moment.

## Square Flips Over Dolphin

As for Square, Cerberus touched on it briefly in Japan Now, but in case you missed it... At the international press conference in Japan (where Square officially announced *Vagrant Story*), the president of the company entered the room and briefly mentioned that "Square is excited about Nintendo's next-generation console." It's only one sentence, and it could mean nothing... but it could also mean everything for Nintendo, since Square's a "system-selling" 3rd party. After their "breakup" with the cartridge-based N64 (which Square didn't feel was capable of producing the games they wanted), Nintendo fans have been yearning for Square to come back to the fold. And now, they might finally get their wish. Prior to the press conference, all we knew for sure was that Square was "looking into" developing for Nintendo's Dolphin. Now, it looks like Nintendo's fantasy may have finally come true. Read it and weep, Sony.

## The Force Will Be With... Sega?

LucasArts has confirmed that a single DC title is in the works. Early speculators used a Jedi mind trick to mislead us so we believed the game in development was *Star Wars Trilogy* (the model 3 arcade game). But now we're hearing that *SWT* is not the game we're looking for. Instead, it's supposed to be a port of the upcoming PC game, *Obi-Wan*, a first person shooter. Move along... move along...

## VOOT Suit Riot!!

Dangohead is weeping tears of joy over this bit of news. If (and that's a big "if") Sega of America decides to pass on bringing *Virtual On: Oratorio Tangram* to the U.S., other third parties are looking into publishing the title over here. As long as gamers can challenge other sausages over the modem, the world will be a better place. Besides, Sega would be crazy not to release this Model 3-Step 2 juggernaut in America... but then again, they let masterpieces like *Radiant Silvergun* and *Grandia* slip on the Saturn. Let's hope they've learned their lesson.

## Geez, More Tears...

Speaking of *Grandia*, Sega of America is looking into publishing the sequel to Game Arts' stellar RPG which never saw the light of day on the U.S. Saturn. <sniff> Will someone get ECM a hanky? Apparently, Working Designs may not have exclusive rights to all of Game Arts titles after all...

## PSY Only Months Away?

Getting back to the system launch race, people said it couldn't be done, but multiple sources have confirmed that Sony is planning on releasing the PlayStation 2 this December in Japan (middle of next year for us). At first, industry-types said that meeting a launch date of Christmas was just wishful thinking on Sony's part and that March of 2000 was more realistic. But developer Koei, the financial institution Morgan Stanley Dean Witter, and the online mail order company NCS have all hinted at a December release. We do know that certain 3rd parties have development kits for PS2 already. Yet there's been no talk of launch titles in all this speculation, or a price tag either.

## No Super Mario 2 for N64

It's time to set the record straight. *Super Mario 2*... it's not going to be on the N64. No matter how much you bitch and cry, after *Zelda Gaiden*, all of Nintendo's efforts are being focused on the Dolphin. Gamers might be getting *SM2* confused with *Super Mario Adventure*, the sequel to *Mario RPG*, which will probably be bouncing Stateside as a cart game, while being released as a DD game in Japan.

Other rumored DD titles in the works include *Super Smash Bros. 2* (expect to see more villains) and a *Pokemon* RPG, which could be just the launch title Nintendo needs to get Japanese gamers excited about the 64DD. Let's just hope they don't call it *Super Pokemon RPG*.

## Hyper Super Ultra, Maybe?

What's in a name? "Dolphin" is the code-name Nintendo's using to refer to their new console (due out here next year); but would you really want your console 2000 to be associated with a marine mammal? Rumors on the Internet have been circulating that Nintendo is 'dropping' the name Dolphin for their console, but if you remember, Dolphin was only a code-name. It was never the official name for the console, which has yet to be decided upon. Can you foresee another naming war in the near future? Katana? Black Belt? Dural? Dolphin? Nintendo 2000?

## Dog Loses Bandicoot, Film at 11

Naughty Dog, creators of the ever-popular *Crash Bandicoot*, has sold the rights of their beloved mascot to Universal. Thus, *Crash 3* will be the last game in the platforming series developed by Naughty Dog, while it is putting the finishing touches on *Crash Team Racing* right now. There's no need to mourn the death of *Crash*, though, because Universal will probably give us a new *Crash* game soon enough. As for Naughty Dog, the company is working on a top secret new character for an undisclosed game right now. We'll keep you posted as soon as we find out what those Naughty Dog guys are up to.

## Dreaming Those Crystal Dreams

What would a month of Other Stuff be without dredging up the most talked about game never to come out? You guessed it, *Robotech: Crystal Dreams*, that supposed N64 launch title which never came out, might still see the light of day. It's been confirmed that Take Two has bought the rights to the code for this game. Supposedly, they're in a bidding war with Harmony Gold for the publishing rights as we speak. So *Robotech* fans still have a shred of a dream to cling to.



# THE POSTMEISTER!


Write to me, I'm running for president!!!
**The Postmeister**
**6301 DeSoto Avenue Suite E**
**Woodland Hills, CA 91367**


***The System Wars***

First off, please forgive me for even considering a letter on this topic. I am just as disgusted by people who rant and rave about their own supported "system" as I am about those who complain about the ranters and ravers. However, I was doing a bit of pondering on the topic and came to a realization.

As I look back on my own involvement in video games, I started when I was a kid, maybe 10 years old or so. At the time, I was also very possessive of the things I owned (toys and the likes). I would fight with my brother over who had the coolest figurine, toy car, etc. Today's young gamers are no different. The video game industry is very interesting in that its user base covers a vast variety of age groups. From pre-teens (the ones who are fighting the "system wars") to twenty or thirty-somethings (the adults who are sick of it all). Granted, this is not a cut and dry observation, I am sure that there are adults out there who also do this system war stuff, but to be honest, it is less likely them. The kids have several reasons behind their system support.

First off, they may not be able to fund their hobby like the adult players. So, they may be asking their parents to make the purchase for them. Well, with such a limited amount of income, of course they want the best one. So, they will support their decision maybe with less maturity than an adult. Second, they have to be around friends who judge them (not just on their hobby, but it is a factor). So, they have to support their toys they own to gain acceptance. Third, at that age, youths are generally combative, and may simply enjoy the fight of video game system supremacy.

All in all, this system war stuff is not out of hand, it is not destroying the video game industry, and it is not the proof of ignorant people who don't understand that it is "just the games." It is simply a by-product of the competition in an industry that has a wide set of demographics. I have determined that the best way to handle this issue is simply to ignore this nonsense, and let the kids enjoy themselves. When we get all caught up in it as mature adults, we only add more fuel to the fire. We've just got to keep in mind we of all age groups are in the same boat, and leave it at that.

Mark D
Via the Internet

*Ahh, I can see that there are those of you who contemplate the morsels of knowledge I've dispensed throughout the years... this student of Post-Fu has stumbled upon one of the greatest tenets of our art, Posty-fans! It's all about the games, not what you play 'em on.*

*This industry is about fun... none of these companies need you to be an advocate of their system, they have marketing departments for that. You think there's some big reward down the road for constantly proclaiming how much you think the PlayStation rules or sucks on the 'Net or among your friends? Maybe there's a nice healthy Postal beating in your near future, but that's about the size of it... My advice? Shut your mouth and open your eyes for a minute, because every gaming system produced these days rocks hard!*



**Peter Han from Portland, OR sends us this super-deformed take on Metal Gear hero Solid Snake. How cute and non-threatening!**

***Lessons In Multi-Dimensional Travel***

Hey Posty!

What's up with the lack of 2-D platformers today? I mean, out of the hundreds of titles these developers release each year, they can't release 3 or 4 a year to satisfy us REAL gamers out here? Every time I read yours, or other mags, there is always somebody complaining that there are no good 2-D games available (and RPG's don't count). Wake the #%@* up, developers!!! We 2-D gamers ARE out here! At least there's always Treasure and SNK... No, wait! They're going 3-D too! Looks like I'm going to have to find a new hobby...

PS: Where can I find the portal to Bizarro World that ECM found, where polygonal turds bow down before the almighty sprite?

Matt Dengler
Dobbs Ferry, NY

*All right Mr. Dengler, you've scaled the merciless peaks and humbled yourself before me, begging for scraps from the banquet table of gaming wisdom... this, I can respect you for. But then you go and mention that you read some "other mags" and force me to unleash the shocking might of my S.T.B. (Steel Toed Boot) upon your unwary cranium. Why, oh why must the voices torment me so?!*

*But even a wisened gaming sage (such as myself) knows that the flesh is weak, so I'll humor you by dispensing the knowledge you seek. The fact is, the video game industry found itself a new toy when it discovered the polygon. Suddenly two dimensions just didn't seem like enough — they wanted ultimate realism, no matter the cost... and as we now know, the price was far too great. Adios, second dimension... I've found a new dance partner and her name is Z-buffer. Let's tango!*

*This all probably sounds pretty disheartening, despicable and downright devestating, but ECM's Bizarro World may still come to pass... just don't give up hope. Some companies still create games for the hardcore old-school players (SNK, Capcom, and many others still haven't dropped the ball) and I don't think we'll see the end of 2-D any time soon. Now I'm going to phone up my close, personal friend Jin Kazama over at Namco and tell him you called him a polygonal turd... I'd expect a personal visit from one of my top Post-Fu students any day now!*

### Dreamcast On The Bungie Cord?

Dear GameFan,

Any chance of a relatively early Oni port to the Dreamcast? It's not fair that only the "swank PC crowd" should have a babe like Konoko fighting for them!

A Prospective Dreamcast Owner
Parts Unknown, USA

*Of course it's fair... that "swank PC crowd" paid thousands of dollars for their gaming rigs, they ought to have something to show for it that the Dreamcast doesn't deliver! You think the thousands upon thousands of PC gaming addicts are happy about the fact that the $200 DC can match their enormous investments without breaking a sweat? Of course not... especially if they're like me, and only make $5/month!*

*Bungie hasn't made any announcements about a Dreamcast port, and as I write this they're still finishing the game itself. Bungie isn't a licensed DC developer though... so don't count on a quick port. It's like everything in this world; if the PC version sells like crazy, you'd better believe it's headed for a console. However, one look at the game's heroine, Konoko, leads me to believe that Bungie's got a real marketable title on their hands!*



**Is Bungie's newest heroine on her way to Sega's DC?**

### Taking Gaming To New Extremes

Hey, I love you guys' magazine. You really are the last true enthusiast mag. In fact, that's about the meat of my letter — thank you for openly supporting the Dreamcast. Thank you for recognizing that this will be THE gamers' machine. Thank you for not thinly disguising an unfounded bias against Sega, while calling Nintendo's Dolphin (an as-yet non-existent machine) the system of tomorrow (I'm sure you know who this perpetrator is).

Anyone who is banking on the PlayStation 2 needs to remember; it's impossible and vastly expensive to program for... two things that don't spell out "success, success." Typically, this would leave Sony as the prime developer for the system... but they don't really have first party development. Sure, they have some 2nd parties, but after *Crash* and *Gran Turismo* have made their appearances, it's going to suck when only a small handful of companies can make the other ten games for the year.

Thanks for any attention to my letter. Never stop the mag, and could you tell Genki to keep the name *Tokyo Highway Battle* as such here in the US? The name *Tokyo Xtreme Racer* really, really sucks. If not, could you print an address at which to contact them?

Nick
Via the Internet

*You know, sometimes I think people forget what the name of this magazine is. If I had a box of frozen peas for every letter I get saying we've 'sold out' for one system or another, I'd be a very rich man... but unfortunately, all I get are these headaches, and the whispering voices that keep telling me to strike down all of gaming's infidels with the five burning fingers of Postal Chi! Listen, GameFan's all about what's new and hot... and guess what folks? The Dreamcast is hotter than Denise Richards at poolside in the middle of a hot Los Angeles summer!*

*But, let's get back to reality here for a second (no simple task, after that Denise Richards mental image). The PlayStation 2 will rock, there's almost no doubt in my mind about that. Nintendo's fishy-sounding new hardware, the Dolphin, is also going to rock. Gaming technology is advancing so far, so fast, that it'd be real hard to make a console that sucks technologically. Unless of course, all you have to work with is two rubber bands, a stick of gum, two refillable pencil leads and your mom's hairnet.*

*The Dreamcast is here and now. It has games we can play... so you're gonna see a lot of Dreamcast coverage in our magazine and on our website. But don't be shocked to see pages and pages of PlayStation 2 and Dolphin coverage as soon as there's something to look at — because this ain't BiasFan or SelloutFan... it's GameFan, junior!*

*Crave is the group of lunatics you want to talk to about the name of* Tokyo Highway Battle *in the US, and by getting your letter published in these hallowed pages, you've just let them know how little you appreciate the game's new title. But I ask you, Postyfans... doesn't a game by any other name taste just as good as your regular brand?*

**Andy C. Madolora sent us this Silent Hill homage from the House of Funk in Oahu, Hawaii. Scary, and yet so very funky!**



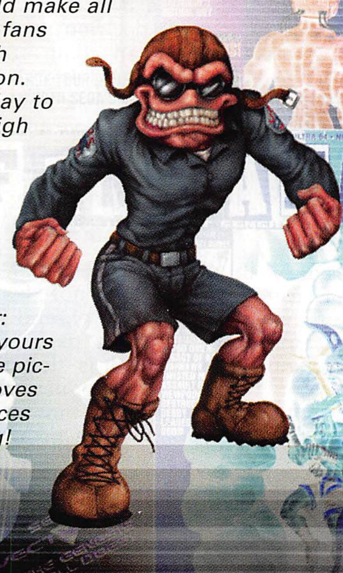

### Swimming With the Dolphin...

How's it hanging Posty? This is the first time I've ever e-mailed someone as I got a computer a little over a week ago. But I have a question concerning Nintendo's next system. With all the hype surrounding the PS2, do you think Nintendo has what it takes to become number one again?

Jorge L Perez
Via the Internet

*Hundreds of millions of dollars at their disposal, the incomparable skill of Shigeru Miyamoto, and Rare as its exclusive tag-team partner? Yeah, I'd say Nintendo has what it takes to be number one again, and judging from the spec sheets the "Big N" has been throwing around, their upcoming system is going to have all the gas in its tank it'll need to make a huge impact when the system launches. I'm gonna say it one more time though, because it feels so good: It's all about the games. If Nintendo delivers the quality titles that appeal to every age group, they're going to rock the world; but if they ignore older gamers as they usually do, they'll be giving Sony and Sega a wide-open window to exploit. All gamers grow up, folks — well, all of 'em but ECM and Eggo...*

*Well the hour is nigh, Posty-fans! Last month I put my super-salty Dreamcast backpack up for grabs, and all you gotta do is deliver a killer piece of original, gaming-related artwork to snag it! This backpack is choice, sturdy and rare, three things that should make all you Sega fans giddy with anticipation. The last day to enter is high noon on Sept. 9th, so you don't have much time left. Remember: Including yours truly in the picture improves your chances of winning!*




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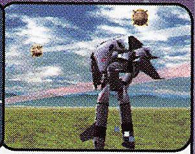
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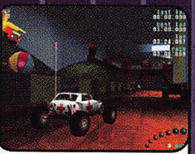
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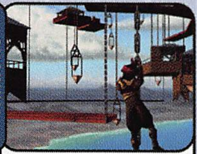
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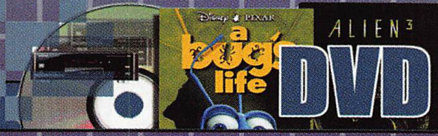

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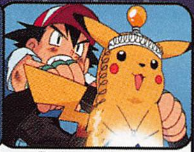
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